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# GOETHE:

## HIS LIFE AND WORKS.

AN ESSAY.

BY

GEORGE H. CALVERT.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD, PUBLISHERS.
NEW YORK:
LEE, SHEPARD AND DILLINGHAM.
1872.

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Cambridge: Printed by Welch, Bigelow, & Co.

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# GOETHE.

## I.

### WEIMAR AND ITALY.

To the English-speaking public Goethe is the great German Poet who wrote *Werther* and *Faust*, — a large, nebulous, remote figure. A smaller circle can call over the catalogue of his principal creative works, prose-fictions as well as poems, and knows that he has a name in Science; and that, surviving to be over fourscore, he lived his latter days in high state at Weimar, the acknowledged primate of all German literary dioceses, a sage as well as poet. But few know that behind the poet, beneath the writer and thinker, lying as solid foundation to the splendid superstructure of sixty printed volumes, is a practical man of business, a vigorous, rigorous, methodical administrator, who, as such, did better work and more of it than was ever done, except by a few of the pre-

dominant lawgivers and wisest, long-lived rulers of populous nations.

For more than fifty years the chosen, trusted, appreciated friend of Carl August, Duke, afterwards Grand-Duke, of Weimar, Goethe was for the first ten years of his long abode in Weimar, from his twenty-sixth to his thirty-sixth year, the chief minister of the wise young Duke, and the virtual administrator of the ducal government, reorganizing during that first decade some of the most important of its departments, and creating new ones.

No detraction is it from the breadth of the principles he applied as political worker, that Goethe's field was limited; but fortunate for the world that it was limited. The reorganizing of a Prussia or an Austria might have swallowed up the whole man, or have absorbed so much of his vitality for more years as to have maimed the poet; whereas, his ministerial functions in Weimar, — performed too as they were through personal love for and enlightened sympathy with the glorious young Duke, — were but a phasis in his unfolding, early lessons that were an initiatory discipline for the poet and thinker, strenuous exercises which developed, fortified, and mellowed the faculties whose predestined field was literature. What-

ever Goethe did, saw, read, whatever he experienced in any shape, he made subservient to his culture. In pains and pleasures, in the most plodding labor and the most fantastic amusement, in all the passages of his daily life, he kept his growth and improvement ever before him. From everything and everybody he came in contact with he drew some food. Like Prospero, he was —

> "All dedicate
> To closeness and the bettering of his mind;"

but he did not need, like Prospero, "to neglect worldly ends;" all such he made serve his primary end of self-culture, moral, æsthetical, intellectual self-culture.

In his twenty-eighth year, January 1777, little more than a twelvemonth from his arrival in Weimar, Goethe writes to Lavater: "Let my present life continue so long as it will, at any rate I have heartily enjoyed a genuine experience of the variegated throng and press of the world, — sorrow, hope, love, work, wants, adventure, ennui, impatience, folly, joy, the expected and the unknown, the superficial and the profound, just as the dice threw, with fêtes, dances, sleighings, — adorned in silk and spangles, — a marvelous *ménage!* And withal, dear brother, God be praised, in myself and in

my real aims in life I am quite happy." About the same time, in a letter from Weimar to a friend, Merck says: "Goethe is the soul and direction of everything, and all are contented with him because he serves many and injures no one. Who can withstand the disinterestedness of this man?" Too earnest a man was Goethe, too true and large a soul, to be flattered by the privileges of high worldly position. He took the chief place under the Duke, to be useful to him and his people. He could be uniquely useful, because he did not covet the place, did not climb up to it from below, but descended upon it a winged benefactor, who folded for a time his wings, or rather made of them magic arms with which all other arms must willingly co-work.

Looking at the wide book-shelf, filled by Goethe's printed works, and knowing their range and achievement, it is at first hard to figure to one's self that, in the first years of his residence in Weimar, the writer of these scores of teeming volumes would, for two or three weeks, scour the whole ducal domain on horseback to supervise the drawing of the men for the war-contingent; that at another time he would accompany the master of the ducal forests and farms over his wide field of duty;

that, as controller of the finances, not the lightest of his tasks was to keep the liberal Duke from overrunning the constable. To Goethe may be applied what himself said of Frederick the Great, that "Whatever he undertook he went at with such zeal as though that alone engaged all his activity, and as though he had never brought anything else to pass." In those days Goethe would start up from bed at a cry of fire, and hurry to a neighboring village, returning the next day with his hair singed and feet blistered. The beautiful park at Weimar was his creation, and in his thirty-second year he was President of the Chambers. The enlargement and elevation of the University of Jena shared some of his attention, with the improvement of the public schools. He organized and then directed the theatre, and the actors he instructed and formed. Once when an actor, accustomed to higher parts, refused that of a trooper, Goethe brought him to by saying: "If you will not play the trooper, I will." Goethe was himself a capital actor. In the like spirit he told his servant, Stadelman, that if some cloths he had ordered for wiping books and engravings were not in their place, he should go out and buy them himself. These incidents prove the thoroughness of his pro-

cedures, and at the same time they give glimpses into the manly cordiality of his daily life. He gave lectures on Osteology in Jena; he studied Anatomy with such insight as to discover an intermaxillary bone in man, and Botany to such purpose that his *Metamorphoses of Plants* is a valuable addition to the discoveries and expositions of science. The wide circle of Goethe's practical experience had been incomplete had he not witnessed —

"The grappling vigor and rough frown of war."

In the advance of the Prussians into France, in 1792, the Duke of Weimar had a command, and Goethe accompanied him. The next year he was again the companion of his friend at the siege of Mayence.

But during the ten years of active statesmanship, from 1776 to 1786, ever strong and stronger within him was the consciousness of his poetic and literary vocation. Amid the most prosaic of doings poems sprang up, like wild flowers in a wheat-field, not destined like these to be cut down and cast aside, but to be laid away as finally the best sowing of his lavish hand. Of such high method was he, that, without neglecting aught of his manifold undertakings, many were the hours and the days

consecrated to finer and more congenial activity, hours sparkling with life and light, which refreshed and strengthened him, and gave him courage for his coarser labors. But now was come the time when, in the ordering of his industrious days, the more prosaic work was to be secondary and the poetic primary. To the public business of the Duchy he had given a sure momentum; he had, part designedly, part unconsciously, by degrees cultivated his young chief, who was six or seven years his junior, and was of most arable stuff; as friend and subject, and as citizen, he had done a large and arduous duty, and had done it well; and now he longed for freedom, and he yearned for Italy.

Goethe was in his thirty-seventh year when he set out on his journey southward. From all, save the Duke, he kept his project secret, and one day, late in the season, in 1786, he disappeared from Carlsbad, his usual summer-resort, and alone, and under an assumed name, he crossed the Alps. Unencumbered by companion or by his own fame, he wished to confront the longed-for land. Never did traveller into crowded, illuminated Italy see more, learn more, enjoy more, and, except his great countryman, Luther, three centuries earlier, profit

more for himself, and through him for the world. The rare fullness of Goethe's endowment, with the fineness of his organization, empowered him to see things as they are, to see around and into them, — especially things on the plane of the beautiful, — with a fidelity seldom equaled. Never man had a clearer, surer eye for the truth in most provinces of observation, thought, and action. Soon after his entrance into Italy, he wrotè to one of his friends : " How rejoiced I am that I have dedicated my life to the *True*, as it is thence so easy for me to pass over to the *Great*, which is only the highest, purest point of the true." The man who had a right to say that, and whose high-strung faculties were busy for fourscore years, surely lived a great, a radiant life, aye, and a blessed life, despite his share of sorrows and troubles, — a full crop, from the very richness of his passional and emotional nature.

Goethe's first long halt in Italy was at Venice. For three weeks, eyes, senses, sensibilities, aptitudes were plied as never before ; for that Shakespeare visited Italy is only a surmise. The morning was devoted to *Iphigenia :* his heartiest, nearest companion was ever some child of the brain, to whose unfolding he gave his freshest hours. Art and nature, pictures

and architecture, men and their manners, doings, traffic, amusements, these filled with life the sunny noons and afternoons. Powerfully was he impressed by the architecture of Venice: "It rose up before him," he said, "like a ghost out of a grave." In the evening, one or other of the theatres attracted and busied him, and before sleeping he wrote to friends, or made more secure with his pen some of the harvest he had gathered during the long, lively day. From Venice he hurried through Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, so eager was he, as eager as Luther, to reach Rome. When he first found himself within the walls, he did not, like Luther, fall on his knees. Happily for us and himself, Goethe had not been brought up a monk: happily for himself and for us, Luther had been.

On November 1st, 1786, his first day in Rome, Goethe writes in a letter to Weimar: "Dreams of my youth I see here living before me." At the end of a week, after having partly familiarized himself with the more prominent objects and scenes, keeping his eyes open and coming again, he makes this practical remark: "It is only in Rome that we can prepare ourselves for Rome." Three days later he writes: "I enjoy here a clearness and calm-

ness, of which for many a day I have had no feeling. My practice of seeing and reading off all things just as they are, my loyalty in letting the eye be its own light, my entire renouncement of all pretension, stand me once more in good stead and make me very happy." This, his calm, broad objectivity, is a chief source of Goethe's literary and scientific faithfulness, of his mastership. He was able not to allow his individuality to refract the beams thrown upon his mind by the object he gazed at. From its depth as well as breadth, and from its having been assiduously wrought and polished and freed by culture from opacities and densities, his intellect was a bright, clear, faithful reflector of what fell on it.

Goethe had that brisk joy in discovery, that lively zeal for truth, which made it easy for him to renounce his personality and to constitute himself a medium, but a conscious, exhilarating medium for, not the transmission merely of light, but, in its unobstructed transmission, for its purification and focalization. Behind none, the least or the largest of his manifold labors and endeavors, was there ever a sordid or a selfish motive. The stream of his life he ever kept unmuddied by ambitious aims : he never wrote a volume or a page for

pelf or power: he never sought the society of an individual or a company to serve some solely personal purpose, but always from the pure impulse of feeding his affections, or from the noble, never satisfied appetite for knowledge and truth. Goethe was not an ambitious man, he was an aspiring man. Plenty and to spare there always are of ambitious men, men who hugely desire and hungrily work for worldly elevation, outward possession, and applause. Aspiring men are rare, men who earnestly desire and zealously work for spiritual elevation, for enlarged inward possession and disinterested satisfactions. Our country, with its broad possibilities, its vivifying abundance, its unchecked movement, its free political solicitations, is flooded, half swamped one at times almost fears, with ambitious men. It must be so. Observe at a station that for further flight the wheels of the great locomotive need gross greasing. But let the passengers have an eye to the strength of the axles and the competence of the conductor.

Towards the middle of December Goethe writes: "This letter will reach you about New Year. I wish you all happiness. Before the end of it we shall meet again, and that will be no small joy. The past year was the most im-

portant of my life; whether I now die or last a while longer, in either case it was good.

"The new birth, which is turning me inside out, goes on. I counted upon learning something thoroughly here; but I did not think I should have to go so far back to school, that I should have to unlearn so much, nay, to learn the very opposite. But I am convinced of it now, and have wholly given myself up to it, and now the more I am obliged to abnegate myself, the more is my joy." No wonder Goethe knew so much and so well, he who knew how at the age of thirty-eight to make himself an obedient, eager pupil. Hence, too, his fresh, boyish interest, to the last, in all things, even the most familiar. He kept on plying his inward sap, and thence never ceased putting forth new leaves; and so he enjoyed a spring feeling even into his last months on earth. Herder said that Goethe was all his life a great child. Your self-assertor is a limited learner. He stiffens himself into imperviousness against the rays that are ever streaming from Nature's countless focuses, rays liberated by the bold thought of open, humble seekers. His self-esteem becomes a perverted citadel, which warns off the approach of the best friends. From the hard, smooth crust of

his self-sufficiency knowledge, especially new knowledge, meets no open-armed, joyful hospitality: light is beaten back.

Goethe was a man of the world, the chief figure at a princely court, a man steeped in the passions and vexations of life; and yet he was the opposite of *blasé*. In him there was nothing of Chateaubriand's life-weariness, no blunted sensibilities even at eighty, no marks of exhaustion. At all stages of his prolonged, strenuous career he had lived healthily. In his latter decades, as in his earlier, a spring of sound feeling gushed daily in his breast, gushed still with force enough to flow outward in sympathy and helpfulness. "I live on a strict diet and keep myself tranquil, in order that objects shall not find my soul over-excited, but shall excite it. Thus is one much less exposed to error." Thus he writes from Rome. With what intelligent devotedness he worked! ever subordinating the lower to the higher. And no one knew better than he the efficacy of alternation in work. While seeing and studying Rome and her treasures he wrought at *Tasso* or *Egmont* or *Faust*, and continued his botanical studies. Rome became secondary: he used it as a stimulant and fertilizer:

the atmosphere he there breathed quickened his faculties to their best productiveness.

On the twenty-first of February he writes: "To-morrow we [his friend Tishbein accompanied him] set out for Naples. I rejoice in the prospect of seeing so much that is new and is said to be so unspeakably beautiful, and I hope in that paradise to gain new freedom and will to return to the study of Art here in earnest Rome.

"Packing is easy to me: I do it with a lighter heart than six months ago when I parted from all that I so much love and value. Yes, it is already a half year, and of the four months passed in Rome I have lost not a moment; which is, to be sure, saying a good deal, but nevertheless not too much."

Two days after arriving in Naples he writes: "I forgive any one who loses his senses in Naples;" and a week later: "That no Neapolitan will budge from Naples, and that her poets sing of the site in excessive hyperbole, is entirely excusable." Already his eyes are set towards Sicily: "The packet for Palermo went off to-day with a pure, strong north-wind. How my looks strained after the full sails as the vessel passed through between Capri and Cape Minerva, and at last disappeared! To

see a beloved person so depart would kill me with very longing." — "In these last days the storms have shown us a glorious sea. There we could study waves in due kind and shape. After all, Nature is the only book which offers us great contents on every page." — "Naples is a Paradise ; everybody lives in a kind of intoxicated self-forgetfulness. I scarcely know myself; I seem to me another man. Yesterday I said to myself — Either thou wast formerly mad, or thou art so now." While in Naples he went into company (which he had not done in Rome), ascended three times Vesuvius, then in full eruption, and saw the celebrated Lady Hamilton, she whom a witty Englishman some years later called Moll Cleopatra.

Head winds lengthened the Sicilian voyage to four days. Lying in his berth, to keep seasickness at bay, Goethe worked at *Tasso.* He had not been long in Palermo when he felt that this enchanting sea-girt scenery is the best commentary on the Odyssey of Homer. He bought a copy and read with such sympathy that soon he was wrought to a productive mood, and Nausikaa became the centre of a tragic conception. Now, in his walks about this Eden, he had to him the most welcome of

all companions, — a lovely woman whom his brain was rearing and adorning. But on the seventeenth of April, a fortnight after landing, he writes : " It is a real misfortune to be pursued and tempted by various spirits. This morning early I went to the public garden with the fixed, quiet purpose to continue my poetic dreams ; but before I was aware of it I was seized hold of by another spirit which had been haunting me for some time.

" The many plants which I was accustomed to see in tubs and pots, nay, the greatest part of the year behind glass, stand here fresh and gay in the open air, and inasmuch as they entirely fulfill their destination they become more distinct to us. In the presence of so many new and renewed forms the old whim came upon me : could I not in this throng discover the *Urpflanze*, the original plant ? [that is, the primary type of all vegetation.] Such there must surely be. For, by what sign should I recognize that this or that form is a plant if they were not all formed on one model ?

" Baffled was my poetic purpose : the garden of Alcinous had vanished, and in its place a common garden opened before me. Why are we moderns so pulled about ? Wherefore are we stimulated to requirements which we cannot fulfill ?"

Homer, said Goethe to himself, while writing that beautiful book of Nausikaa in the Odyssey, was not liable to be distracted from his heavenly task by the allurements of a scientific hypothesis, newly broached in his own brain. Not he indeed. The poets of Greece, and all other Greeks, were far enough from being visited by scientific imaginations; hardly even when the poetic and the great age of Greece had passed, and upon the clear mind of Aristotle had dawned the prolific truth, that only through her details are the wholes of Nature to be comprehended, only through induction can Law be fully recognized and firmly established. Now at last it is known, that even minds of the deepest grasp and widest compass cannot be sure of a generic conclusion without the verification of facts. And Goethe, the poet, has done not a little to the establishment and fortification of this assurance. He was both deductive and inductive. He was open to vast *a priori* visions, and he was capable of patiently putting them to the test of touch. At once so large and so delicate were his endowments, and thence through them so direct and susceptible his *rapport* with Nature, that he caught far-off glimpses of her secrets, at great moments felt her throb through his arteries,

had presentiments of yet undiscovered lights. From the chapter on "The Poet as a Man of Science" in the very full and admirable *Life of Goethe*, by Mr. Lewes, I take the following paragraph: —

"Place a flower in the hands of the cleverest man of your acquaintance, provided always he has not read modern works of science, and assure him that leaf, calyx, corolla, bud, pistil, and stamen, differing as they do in color and in form, are nevertheless all modified leaves; assure him that flower and fruit are but modifications of one typical form, which is the leaf; and if he has any confidence in your knowledge he may accept the statement, but assuredly it will seem to him a most incomprehensible paradox. Place him before a human skeleton, and, calling his attention to its manifold forms, assure him that every bone is either a vertebra, or the appendage to a vertebra, and that the skull is a congeries of vertebræ under various modifications; he will, as before, accept your statement, perhaps; but he will, as before, think it one of the refinements of transcendental speculation to be arrived at only by philosophers. Yet both of these astounding propositions are first principles in Morphology; and in the History of Science both of these proposi-

tions are to be traced to Goethe. Botanists and anatomists have, of course, greatly modified the views he promulgated, and have substituted views nearer and nearer the truth, without yet being quite at one. But he gave the impulse to their efforts."

The plaint of Goethe at Naples was nevertheless sincere. So full was his being, that by natural equipment he was a Greek and at the same time a modern and a Teuton. In that warm air and glowing landscape, reading the Odyssey, which he says, "was to him now for the first time a living word," the Greek was uppermost. His plaintive interrogatory may however be met with another question. Why was his *Nausikaa* never finished? And why did *Achilleis*, and *Prometheus*, and *Elpenor* remain fragments? These, to be sure, were not his only uncompleted undertakings; for his mind was so generative that in its fervent moods subjects crowded upon him (he once wrote to Schiller, "I can only think in so far as I produce"), subjects which in the glow of the moment rounded themselves to glistening wholes, but which his imagination could not hold so steadily and continuously in its grasp as to give them æsthetic organization. But all the abovementioned he worked at for some time and then

abandoned. Is not this the cause of their abandonment, that a Grecian hero will not bear being taken out of old Greece, cannot live but on Grecian air? Three thousand years, though it be a small segment of the circle of humanity on earth, and may imply nothing comparable in degree to the change of physical conditions from the *miocene* to the *eocene* periods in the earth's growth, does imply a change in moral conditions, and such a change, as we know from social and historical facts, that the man of *then* would find himself inadequately equipped for our exposures, and the man of *now* would languish in the grosser, and yet mentally less nutritive atmosphere of the times of Æschylus as well as of those of the earlier Homeric age. The Greeks were not only unscientific, they were comparatively unspiritual. The most unfortunate of their heroes and thinkers had but lightly borne the burden of the world, which is an inward burden self-imposed, not laid on chiefly by circumstances. Goethe, the greatest of the later moderns, had been wrestling all his life with this load, had sought (a seeking which Homer would not have comprehended) to solve life's mysteries. When he became so fascinated with a Greek as to take him up æsthetically, and attempted to reproject him on a poetic

plane, he found that the lungs of his beautiful pagan were not expansible to his, Goethe's, deeper breathings. And, however much a poet may identify himself with his adopted personage, he must, to make him live, breathe into him the essence of his own moral nature, or his attempt ends in mechanism, not in creation. Hence *Achilleis* is a fragment and a failure, and *Hermann and Dorothea* a heavenly success.

Grecian heroes in the hands of modern poets cease to be solar and become lunar. Not from fresh heat is their light, but from the Sun of Antiquity. That Sun, when it was a flaming, present, daily centre, was fiery enough to impart a life which made them undying agents in the universe of thought, and a light from which the modern world still draws illuminating beams; but their elements cannot be reimpregnated by modern inspiration. Like our earthly moon, they are cold and dead, without atmosphere that can interchange with ours. To us they are only serviceable in their primitive existence, which is incapable of reanimation. Only through the great poets who first bodied them forth can they live that first life infused into them by their age. In *Troilus and Cressida* Shakespeare, with his plastic mastery, shifts the characters and events of Homer from

an epic to a dramatic, and more than that, from a tragic to a comic, form. Had Shakespeare made of Agamemnon and his compeers Shakespearean Englishmen, he would so far have denaturalized them ; but such Anglicanizing is in this case mostly in the fancy of the modern reader. Shakespeare took in hand the Homeric heroes to get some fun out of them, leaving them as he found them, except for a more distinct and brilliant outline, through the intellectual light which inevitably fell on whatever he gazed at. The comedy of *Troilus and Cressida* is merely a recasting of noted Greeks into other attitudes, with a sportive, if not a satiric, purpose.

The Romans are much nearer to us. Shakespeare could use Plutarch as he used Hollinshed. The Romans whom he handles he exalts to the plane of poetry without lifting them out of history. And note, that when he takes them in hand they are purely historic figures, not poetic. The Greeks whom Goethe worked on are not historic but purely poetic figures ; nay, are poetic creations, individuals of whom we should know nothing but for their poetic makers. They have been made poetically and are not to be re-made. Out of legend were they uplifted, and Goethe cannot lift them any

higher ; nor could even Shakespeare, who could and did uplift Coriolanus and Antony. And this is even a weightier consideration than the remote foreignness of Goethe's Greeks. They are not only pagan Greeks but mythological Greeks, that is, Greeks who have been promoted into the empyrean of semi-deified manhood, embodying poetically the quintessence of ancient Grecian national life and belief. Moulded by Beauty, they loom through the ages in heroic stature, the idealized incarnations of a vivid phase of human being. It is well not to attempt to set them on modern pedestals.

The only way in which the Gods of Greece can be made plastic to modern creation is that the poet, going behind them to that out of which they all spring, — the mind of man, — shall use them to depict the growth of the human spirit in its æsthetic evolution and heavenward aspiration. This has been done by Keats in that majestic torso, *Hyperion*. In the speech of Oceanus is the key to the broad, original, and splendid conception of the young English giant. Oceanus tells his defeated brother Titans : —

> "We fall by course of nature's law, not force
> Of thunder or of Jove."

"Mark well!
As heaven and earth are fairer, fairer far
Then Chaos and blank Darkness, though our chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness."

In *Hyperion* is bodied forth with a breadth and splendor of style, with an ideal grandeur, and at the same time with a human fidelity and a flushing warmth, which have never been surpassed, the very spirit of mental and religious progress. In studying this divine fragment, written at the age of twenty-four, one is reminded of the answer of Goethe when Eckerman said to him that *Faust* bears evidence in every line of most careful study of life and the world: the reader, said Eckerman, takes it to be the fruit of the amplest experience. "Yet," replied Goethe, "had I not had the world in my soul from the beginning, I must ever have remained blind with my seeing eyes, and all experience and observation would have been dead and unproductive. The light is there, and the colors surround us; but if in our own eyes we bore nothing corresponding, the outward appa-

rition would not avail us." In this "heart-lore," as Coleridge calls it, speaking of Shakespeare, Keats was most rich.

By the middle of May Goethe was back in Naples, having narrowly escaped shipwreck on the voyage from Palermo. On the seventeenth he writes: "Most happy am I that I now carry in my soul so clearly and vividly the great, beautiful, incomparable image of Sicily.

"Now there is in the South no object which is a cause of longing to me, as I returned yesterday from Pæstum.

"The sea and the islands gave me joy and grief, and I come back satisfied.

"Let me reserve details until my return. Naples is not a place for thinking and remembering. This region I can now describe to you better than I did in my first letters. I must see you so soon as possible: those will be bright days. I have laid away a vast pile, and need quiet to work it off."

The first week of June found him again in Rome hard at work, studying, drawing, composing. Towards the end of June he writes to Weimar: "I have handsome lodgings, good servants. Tishbein is going to Naples, and I take possession of his studio, a large, cool hall. When I am in your mind, think of me as of

one who is happy. I will write often, and thus we are and remain together.

"I have plenty of new thoughts and fancies. I have refound my earliest youth, even to trifles, since I am left entirely to myself; and at the same time the elevation and worth of the objects around me carries me as high and far as only my later being could reach. Nothing clouds the atmosphere of my thoughts, except that I cannot share my happiness with those I love."

On the twentieth of July we have a letter of more than usual biographical value.

"I have been able in these days to discover two of my cardinal faults, which have been persecuting and tormenting me all my life. One is, that I never could master the handicraft of a thing I wished to work at. Thence it is that with so much natural gift I have brought so little to pass. The other fault, closely related to this one, is, that I never could give to a work or business as much time as it needed. As I possess the happiness to be able to think and combine much in a short time, a step by step execution is to me irksome and unbearable."

By the first fault Goethe had lately been especially tormented, because he did not, perhaps

would not, discover till now that for success in the plastic Arts he lacked the indispensable, though subordinate, mechanical readiness. His hand could not learn deftly and obediently to give form to his conceptions, to the images in his brain. In a letter written a few days before the above, he had become at last so fully aware that owing to this manipulating inadequacy he could not be a painter, that, instead of rejoicing as usual in his progress, he puts forth the modest avowal, "With time I may become a connoisseur." But in his true calling, the literary, — and true because he was so complete in his qualification, — never was there poet or writer whose genius was more fully and ably seconded by his talents. Details, facts, words, images, were abundantly at his command; memory and fluency were both remarkable; his shaping and constructive ability was ready and competent, and he had an Artist's eye for pictures and proportion. In this, more favored than his contemporary, Wordsworth, who lacked both constructive art and verbal fluency, and who embodied his conceptions by strength of will, moved by a poetic presence so large and vivid, that it would utter itself. Hence, the dynamic force, so much exceeding the mechanical facility, wrought its effects with dispropor-

tioned tools ; which accounts for the occasional baldness or dryness of Wordsworth, and perhaps also, in some measure, for a frequent diamond-like compactness and unsullied sparkle. Goethe's rare imaginative affluence and mental fertility, and consequent eagerness to give shape to his inspirations, this it was that made him feel as an individual defect what is a universal human incompetency. While the mind can take wings and range instantly to the uttermost confines of stellar space, the body has to use legs, which are ever clogged with earthward gravitation. He who would give a body to the conceptions of his mind, must submit to the laws of gravity. For this, besides strong inward agitation, strong will is needed. And so, Coleridge, lacking this will, let many of his mind's creative suggestions exhale in day-dream, or disperse themselves in golden talk. His friend, Allston, similarly gifted with poetic thought, was at times similarly relaxed in will, and strove to content himself with pictures in the brain. When mildly reproached with not finishing "Belshazzar's Feast," he answered : "It is finished : I have it here" (touching his forehead) : "all I have to do is to transfer it to canvas." In any poetic province that all is all of the work : the mental

creation is heavenly play. The difference between conception and execution is the difference between the spiritual and the material, between the heavenly and the earthly.

His best hours in Rome Goethe gave to some of his best works: *Egmont*, *Tasso*, *Wilhelm Meister*, *Faust*. Towards midsummer (1787) he determined to prolong his stay in Rome to the following spring. He had the ready consent of the Duke, who, besides feeling that Goethe was entitled to this holiday for his past services, had for him the disinterested sympathy of a true friend, and knew moreover the value of the work Goethe was doing, of the stores he was gathering. But Weimar's "society" grumbled at his long absence, and that he should be drawing his whole salary; as if he had not earned it long ago, and was not earning it now. Yet the complaint of Weimar is creditable to her: she missed Goethe, and that showed that she set some store by him. She was like a large, well-appointed steamboat with a small engine. The half of her motive force was absent: she felt empty.

To justify himself and reconcile his friends, Goethe writes on the eleventh of August: "I remain in Italy till next Easter. I cannot just now break away from my apprenticeship. If I

hold on, I am sure that my friends will have cause to be glad of it. You shall have letters from me, and my writings I will send; and so you will have an image of me as of an absent live man, instead of, what you used so often to complain of having, a present dead one." In a letter of the same date to another of his friends he says: "I shall then have lived through, clean finished, an important epoch, and can begin again and strike in where is most urgent. I feel such buoyancy of spirits, and am quite another man from what I was a year ago."

Goethe lived by principles and for principles. He always sought the essence and law of things; the temporary, the expedient, the superficial, the showy, were distasteful to him. Here is a significant passage from a letter of the twenty-third of August: "I am now so remote from the world and all worldly things, that it seems strange to me when I read a newspaper. 'The fashion of the world passeth away:' I wish to busy myself only with relations that are permanent, and thus, according to the doctrine of ——, give to my mind its first experience of eternity."

While Goethe was away in Italy, his friend, Herder, was superintending an edition of his works in eight volumes, four of which had just

been sent to him. On the twenty-second of September he writes to Herder: "It gives me an extraordinary sensation that these four thin little volumes, the results of half a life, should seek me out in Rome. I can truly say, there is not therein a syllable which has not been lived, felt, enjoyed, suffered, thought."

In strenuous, various, unintermitted work he spent these precious months, part of the summer at Albano, Tusculum, castle Gandolfo. A few sentences, detached from his letters, will give glimpses into his doings, reflections, and condition. "Now I hope that the time will also come for making an end. But the making an end lies very far off when one sees far." — "The life of a man is his character." — "I have had opportunities to reflect much on myself and others, on the world and history, whereon I shall have some good things to say, although not new. Finally it will all be taken up into *Wilhelm Meister*." — "A new epoch is beginning in me. Through so much seeing and learning, my mind is so much expanded, that I must now bound myself by some single work.

"The individuality of a man is an extraordinary thing; I have got to know mine well, from having had this past year, on the one hand, to rely solely on myself, and on the

other, from having had to consort with people who are strangers to me." — "The splendor of the greatest works of art dazzles me no more. I behold them now with a genuine discriminative knowledge." — "I am permitted to throw looks into the nature of things and their relations, which open to me an abyss of wealth." — "There are more foreigners here, with whom I sometimes go to galleries. They remind me of wasps in my room, who fly against the windows, mistaking the clear panes for air, and then rebound and buzz upon the walls." — "My brain is distracted with much writing, doing, and thinking. I grow no wiser, exact too much of myself, and put too much upon myself." — "I am industrious and happy, and so await the future. Daily it becomes clearer to me that I was born for poetry, and that for the next ten years, — the most that I can count upon to work, — I ought to cultivate this talent and yet bring something good to pass, seeing that the fire of youth made me often successful without much study."

On first reading this last sentence, one is surprised that in Goethe should have been delayed to nearly his fortieth year the discovery to himself of his poetic vocation. But he does not say that now for the first time this has

become clear to him: his words are, "Daily it becomes clearer to me." An opinion, long entertained, is braced to a certainty. The expansion of his mind through the beautiful novelties of Italy, the exhilarating change and the freedom and independence in his occupations, and as a consequence of all this, the quickening of his powers, clinched into a fast conviction what he had often felt. The consciousness of his poetic gift, instead of getting weaker with the flow of years, had grown stronger, giving thus proof not only of its own genuineness and solidity, but of the reach of his faculties.

In Goethe the fire of youth was not a mere crackling of tender twigs, which give out a momentary fury of flame and are then quickly consumed, creating no permanent heat. In him this inward fire, not fed solely on youthful impulses, burnt on through his fourscore years, because in his maturing faculties it found sapful fuel to nourish it. The poet who is not a thinker commands but part of the strings of his wondrous instrument, touching faintly those which give to verse its depth and sonorous compass. Thus his range is soon exhausted, and the effect of what he does is neither so incisive nor so enduring. The broad survey, the well-proportioned combina-

tions, the intellectual insights of thoughtful judgment, not only empower the poet to clasp larger, more organic themes, they aid him to give character to even his minor efforts, to impart a more lasting, and a finer perfume to single flowers of feeling rhythmically presented.

Now was come the hour of parting. On the tenth of April (1788) Goethe writes: "My body is still in Rome, not my soul. So soon as the resolve was made to go, I took no further interest in anything, and I would rather have been off a fortnight since. I stay on for the sake of Kayser and for the sake of Bury. The days pass away, and I can do nothing more, hardly see anything." His last days were celebrated, one may say, with a grand, and to him most acceptable pomp. For three nights the moon, at the full, from the clearest sky and through the calmest air, threw its mystic light over the great city. "All that is massive," writes Goethe on the occasion, "makes a peculiar impression as at once sublime and cognizable, and in such presence I summed up the infinite sum of my whole residence in Rome. This, deeply and largely received into an excited soul, awoke a mood which I may call heroic-elegiac, out of which an elegy was urgent to be embodied in poetic form."

## II.

### POETRY AND SCIENCE.

We say the body has ceased to grow when the individual has reached the height allotted him by Nature. A sound, well-conditioned mind never ceases to grow. Goethe's did not, and his memorable last words, "More light!" were symbolical of the life-long need of his mind; or, if not that, they were an exclamation of joy at the glimpse vouchsafed his soul, ere yet free of its earthly vesture, into that elysium of transearthly activity he had earned, the certainty of which was among his stablest convictions. Goethe's growth was of that solid dynamic kind where, the healthy ferment of nature being directed and tempered by an art of rare grasp and foresight, every stage is a vantage-ground for further gain. Such especially was that he had reached by his eighteen months in Italy. He quitted Rome with eager, æsthetic appetites gratified, with an enlargement of his mental horizon through the acquaintance he had made with a gifted people, and with pos-

sessions which vitalized and mellowed the atmosphere of his thoughts.

During Goethe's absence Weimar had lacked its animating spirit, had been abridged of its chief privilege, the appropriation of such a man. Weimar was now glad to have him back, healthily glad, as people are, in their good moods, for the bounties of Nature; luxuriously glad, as a company is when its emptiness has just been filled by a choice repast. But the aspiring poet, the self-improved man, the eager votary whose finest happiness was to learn new truth and to produce new thought and poetry, he found little sympathy, little of that subtler recognition which, next to the delight of creation, gives the poet his purest joy. Hear himself: "Thrown back out of Italy, so rich in forms, into Germany, so barren in forms, obliged to exchange cheerful skies for gloomy, my friends, instead of comforting me and drawing me again to them, drove me to despair. My enthusiasm for remote objects, my sufferings, my regrets for what I had left behind me, seemed to offend them. They gave me no sympathy; no one understood my language." The case looks indeed desperate, and Goethe, without their support, would have felt as empty as they had felt without his presence, had he

not been Goethe. The poet's reliance, and the thinker's, is within himself. Besides, as Goethe had his uncommon individuality, he should have reminded himself — and no doubt did so in his clearer moods — that his friends and neighbors had their common individuality, and that every man must hold tightly to his own, to himself; for, after all, a man's personality, however small, is the best he has. In his distress Goethe threw himself passionately into the pursuit of the typical plant. He sought comfort in the "Metamorphoses of Plants." A man who is open to such consolation is safe against pity, as well as against despondence. Moreover, he had now as ever to support him his beautiful principle of self-renunciation. In 1780, while virtual sovereign of the Duchy of Weimar, he had written: "In my present circle of activity I have little, almost no hindrance from without; in myself much. Human faults are right down tape-worms; you tear off some day a piece, and the original stock keeps its place. But I will be master. None but he who entirely renounces himself is worthy to govern, is able to govern." This maxim, put in practice, would it not empty Washington in a week?

Besides a lack of sympathy in his immediate

circle of Weimar, a circle which himself had shaped and instructed, and to which therefore he had a right to look for some apprehension of the enlarged man, the now ripened artist, so conscious himself on his return from Italy of enlargement and a finer culture, — besides this disappointment, which high inward resources and his use of disappointment, together with the devotion of the choice spirits of Weimar, enabled him soon to overcome, he had another, in the apathy of the larger circle of the reading public. So few people had their æsthetic eyes sufficiently open to see what was in *Iphigenia* and *Egmont*, that the publisher of the first complete edition of Goethe's works complained of the slowness of its sale. To aggravate this failure was the success of books which belonged to what was called the "storm and stress" period, a period which Goethe himself had fostered in his younger days with *Werther* and *Goetz*, but which he had hoped the times, like himself, had outgrown. Of this class the most popular then were *The Robbers* and *Fiesko* of Schiller, and the *Ardinghello* of Heinse. It was an imprudent hope on the part of Goethe. Does the larger reading public ever outgrow the taste for what we now call sensation-books, for novelties momentarily ex-

citing? Goethes and Schillers, artists at once capable and conscientious, they outgrow even the power of producing such; but how can they expect that the crowd of the half-educated and the miseducated should? The function of Goethes and Schillers — and they both fulfilled it faithfully and efficiently — is to enlarge by firm classical work the smaller circle of the more finely appreciative, enkindling a light which shall permanently radiate, and thus tend to disperse the ignorance and crudeness whence rises the atmosphere whereon shallow literature is nourished.

Now, when Goethe has been gradually raised to a height where all, who have a look for such elevations, behold him shining among the half dozen wealthiest heirs of creative genius, it is curious, and not without instruction, to note the ever-renewed battle he had to wage against detraction and indifference, a battle waged not by critical defenses of the book attacked, — defenses to which he never condescended, — but by the publication of another, and yet another work, through a long series of years. *Goetz von Berlichingen* and *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, his first ventures, made more than a sensation, they made a deep impression, partly from the power and originality wherewith they gave

literary utterance to the spirit of the age, and partly from their contrast to the recent artificial poetry and fiction of Germany, which wanted not only power but life. Both *Goetz* and *Werther* were variously assailed, and among others by Lessing, a true and most serviceable critic, but who lacked central glow fully to feel their present power, and thence failed of the sympathetic insight (a kind of literary second sight) to recognize the promise they carried. Nicolai of Berlin tried to turn *Werther* into ridicule; the current, or rather torrent, of its popularity swept away for the time all opposition. An anonymous writer declared that *Stella*, an ineffective prose tragedy of Goethe, belonging to his first period, was a case for criminal prosecution. Riemer, for many years a faithful intelligent secretary of Goethe, says that *Iphigenia* and *Tasso* were out a long time before any one took notice of them. Novalis (the *nom de plume* of Hardenberg) called Goethe a heathen, and spoke of Frederick Schlegel as the first of living poets! Later, the two Schlegels, jealous of Goethe, tried to set up Tiek as his rival, which attempt drew from Goethe that memorable comment. Tiek, said Goethe to Eckerman, is a man whose great merits I readily acknowledge, but when the Schlegels "tried to

raise him above his proper place, and spoke of him as my equal, they made a mistake. I do not hesitate to speak of myself as I am: I did not make myself what I am. But I might, with as much propriety, compare myself with Shakespeare, who also is, as he was made, a being of higher order than myself, to whom I must look up and pay due reverence."

*Wilhelm Meister* was sharply criticised, and but partially approved. What *Wilhelm Meister* means people are yet puzzled to know, which is surely excusable, seeing that its author himself hardly knew. He said to Eckerman in 1825: "*Wilhelm Meister* is a most incalculable production: I myself can scarcely be said to have the key. The critic seeks a central point, which is, in truth, hard to find. I should think a rich manifold life, brought close to our eyes, might suffice, without any determined moral tendency which could be reasoned upon. But, if this is insisted on, it may perhaps be found in what Frederick, at the end, says to the hero: 'Thou seemst to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a Kingdom.' For what does the whole say, but that man, despite all his follies and errors, led by a higher hand, reaches some worthy aim at last." And to the reader I

would say, that he too, in seeking a purpose, may find within the covers of *Wilhelm Meister* a literary Kingdom, rich in life and art, in pictures, images, insights, rich in beauty and wisdom, all embodied in a variegated concourse of personages, drawn with a Shakespearean distinctness and buoyancy and truthfulness, among whom Mignon glistens with that pungent sparkle which denotes genius of the first water.

Scarcely a book of Goethe's has been more subject to ignorant detraction, to shallow misrepresentation than the *Wahlverwandtshaften* (Elective Affinities), the key to which is given in a remark of Reinhard of Dresden, who said, he wondered that Goethe "should be so severe on the subject of marriage, he who entertained such free opinions on other subjects." The book, unsurpassed among prose fictions for æsthetic merits, may be regarded as a thrilling protest against conjugal infidelity. The tragic consequences of surrender to the counter currents of intersexual affinities are depicted with such power and art, that the capable reader closes the book impressed with the truth, that here as elsewhere inviolable and supreme should be the moral law of self-renunciation. Self-renunciation is, at last, but the substitution of one motive power for another, of a higher for a

lower. A spiritual and moral feeling, sense of justice, of disinterested love, of dutifulness, rises to such fullness that it floods the mind, and so submerges the lower selfish feeling, that the self, the whole self, now under control of the higher self, is gratified, and enjoys a liveliness and happiness of being only to be obtained through such control. When the balance is struck, no loss, no sacrifice is registered, but, on the contrary, acquisition. There has been no violence, no suppression; there has been a harmonizing through natural adaptation, and thence an elevation, a culmination.

*Hermann and Dorothea*[1] had an immediate as well as permanent success. Schiller was delighted with it, and Goethe's habitual detractors even had to give in. Its general acceptability was owing largely no doubt to its subject, which is German and contemporaneous, its scene being laid in the Rhine-land just after the French Revolution. Goethe, in a letter to Schiller of the third of January, 1798, thus alludes to it with that delicate irony so easy to him: "As regards the material, I have this once given the Germans their hearts' desire, and they are highly satisfied. I am now considering whether

[1] We have an admirable American translation of *Hermann and Dorothea* by Ellen Frothingham.

one could not on this plan write a dramatic piece which should be played on every stage, and which everybody should pronounce admirable, without the author needing so to regard it."

When Goethe was at Naples (in 1787) a lady of his acquaintance engaged him one day to be at her house punctually at five in the afternoon, to meet an Englishman who had something to say to him about *Werther*. Contrary to his habit Goethe arrived late, and as he was about to ring the bell the door opened, and there stood before him a handsome middle-aged man who, the moment his eyes fell on Goethe, said, —"You are the author of *Werther*." Goethe acknowledged that he was, and apologized for not being punctual. "I could not wait longer, but what I wish to say to you is very brief, and can be said as well here on the door-mat, as anywhere else. Whenever I think of what was required for the writing of that book, I am filled with new wonder." Goethe began to say something courteous in return, when the Englishman interrupted him: "I cannot stay a moment longer: my desire is gratified, which was, to say this to yourself. Farewell; may you be prosperous and happy." With that he ran down the steps.

No one could have written *Werther* but Goethe, that is, no one but the man who had it in him to write the greater pages which he afterwards wrote; and the phrase of the Englishman applies with tenfold more emphasis to *Hermann and Dorothea* than to *Werther*. It takes Shakespeare to write one of Shakespeare's scenes; but in a scene of *Macbeth* there is infinitely more of Shakespeare than in a scene of *Love's Labor's Lost*. Written twenty years later than *Werther*, after a growth such as is known only to sapful genius, *Hermann and Dorothea* is the juicy fruit of the maturity of the master, whose rare faculties had been cultivated by a productively busy manhood, and whose æsthetic culture had now received its decisive lesson by a residence of eighteen months in Italy. In *Hermann and Dorothea* there is a twofold world of wealth, emotional wealth and intellectual, a knowledge as accurate as it is varied, handled with the tact and grace which can only spring from a sensibility at once full and fine.

The landlord of an inn, with his wife and son, the pastor and the apothecary of a small town, where they all live in semi-rural quiet, and a maiden — these are the materials that are moulded into a story which, by the deep art of the poet, is made to embrace relations at

once the most vital and the most universal, and, through the same art, to present a rounded buoyant whole, glancing with light and shade, and aglow with the warmth of a wise humanity. By the transfiguring might of poetic genius, the prosaic personages of a petty secluded town and the impulses of a household life are made to throb with æsthetic power, are expanded into epic magnitude. With so much poetic truthfulness is the story told, that, simple as it is, it has its suspensions and surprises, and an inexhaustible depth, and a limpidity like that of the spring into which Hermann and Dorothea gazed together, and saw reflected therein themselves and the calm blue of the heaven above them.

This poem, one of the masterpieces of literature, signally illustrates the power of Art. Phidias takes up a ball of common clay. His fingers work upon it a few hours, and then set it before you a human head, with the look of manhood upon it, with the thought and speech of manhood within it, — a shapeless, lifeless lump, suddenly transmuted into a beaming human individuality. The persons of *Hermann and Dorothea*, when Goethe first takes them in hand, are the very finite figures, the cabined personages, one meets in any small town. The

moment he busies himself on them, how they begin to grow! Into these prosaic burghers he breathes the breath of poetic life. This is the inexplicable, incommunicable magic of genius.

Goethe is a born embodier: his imaginations were not spent on the abstract; they ever sought to actualize themselves in the concrete, in palpable, lively being. To effect this he had at his command the highest artistic gift, that of characterization: and the possession of the gift urges him to its exhibition. In the rare power of setting men and women to talk, move, and act, so that you feel their presence and personality as though they were audible, visible, tangible creatures, in this supreme gift it is not too much to say that Goethe has never been surpassed: supreme I call the gift, because it implies the poetic as crowning faculty to other ripe faculties.

Goethe is preëminently a naturalist. To all the pulsations of Nature his heart keeps time; his susceptibilities have been tutored by her tendernesses; his perceptions have been educated by her infinite differentiations; his ideals never transcend her scale. The naturalness of each and all of the figures in *Hermann and Dorothea* is their chief charm, a charm which flows

from privileged insight into Nature's secrets, and a giant's grasp of her amplitudes, combined with subtlest observation of minute particularities. The pseudo-artists, the novelists, succeed by not being naturalists, by drawing one-sided men and women, by exaggerating some qualities and features, thus giving caricatures instead of portraits ; and the general acceptability of their work is due in part to this their incapacity to present personages that are poised and modest, the vast majority of their readers delighting in high colors and partialities, in extravagant situations and overstrained feelings. A cardinal characteristic of Goethe is his love of proportion, resulting not solely from his artistic endowments, but in large measure from equilibrium in his many gifts and capabilities. In Goethe the purely poetical does not predominate as it does in Wordsworth and Shelley and Shakespeare.

Ever true to Nature, from the richness and fullness of his aptitudes, his movement has an unfailing security, while the judgment of the practiced thinker is deepened by the poet's illuminating vision ; and to *Hermann and Dorothea* especially is imparted the mellowness of a broad, genial humor, so genial as to involve the whole in a cheerful light. Each personage,

compact and rounded, glistens with individual life, and, through the constructive and unifying power of the æsthetic master, through the skill and firmness of his affiliations, they are all bound into melodious harmony.

*Hermann and Dorothea* is the most exquisite of Idyls, expanded to epic stature by breadth of treatment and poetic significance, and to epic grandeur by the French Revolution, out of which it is in part wrought, a principal figure, and through her the chief incident, to the quiet burgher story, being furnished by that great upheaval, which makes a dark lurid background to the picture. The declaration of Hermann that, —

"Good men are surely oft warned by a spirit from heaven,"

we may take as a recognition of the super-earthly element, the distinct recognition of which is deemed essential to epic completeness.

Goethe's autobiography was published late in his life, under the title, *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* ("Out of my Life: Poetry and Truth"). The second title might be better rendered by "Imagination and Fact," for the meaning is, that in such a work the autobiographer's imagination will unavoidably color

many statements, and so there will be a mixture of facts with things imaginatively represented. The book was so caviled at, especially the title, that Goethe, soon after its publication, wrote in 1813 to a friend: "The Germans have this peculiarity, that they cannot take a thing as it is given to them. Do you present them the handle of the knife, they find that it is not sharp: do you offer them the point, they complain of being wounded." The Germans, with all their culture, are — like Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, the most of them, even those of good education — one-sided, and such can but partially see a many-sided man like Goethe. Hence by some he is reproached with being too exclusively intellectual, by others with being too sentimental. Some even call him cold! There are people who, if a portrait in profile is shown them, will begin to pity the original for having but one eye.

There were critics, half critics (whole critics are rare), who could not, or would not, see the fresh and rare merits of the collection of short poems in twelve books called *West-oestlicher Divan* (West-eastern Divan), written also late in life. Its origin is peculiarly characteristic of Goethe. In 1813 the translation, by von Hammer, of the Poems of Hafiz fell into his

hands, and by these he was so affected that, in his own words, he "had to become productive, in order not to be overwhelmed by them." The strong effect was much owing to his sympathy, especially now in his autumnal life, with the serenity and cheerfulness and wisdom of the famous Persian Poet. In 1819, just after the publication of the *Divan*, Goethe, then in his seventieth year, sending a copy to Zelter, says: "The Mahometan religion, manners, mythology, give scope to a poetry such as suits my years. Unconditional resignation to the unfathomable will of God, cheerful survey of the restless bustle on the earth, ever repeating itself in circling and spiral movement, love, inclination swaying between two worlds, all the real made clear, resolving itself symbolically — what more would the grandpapa have?"

The poems of Hafiz moved Goethe to embody in verse with an Oriental coloring much that lay stored and ripened within him, waiting just for this stimulus. Goethe did not need threescore years to learn wisdom: he began manhood wise: whoever does not so begin will not end wise even at fourscore. But life and experience, so deep and manifold for him, mellowed his judgments and enlarged their field. Now was the natural time for him to do what,

to be sure, he had always been doing, but to do it with more directness and more zest, that is, to array wisdom in poetry. From the pages of the *Divan* is more apparent than elsewhere that Goethe is the more wise for being a poet, and the more of a poet for being wise. Wise words can with sincerity proceed but from one capable of wise conduct; for wisdom may be described as the transfusion of spiritual principles into daily practice. A knowing man is one who cleverly accommodates his doings to the demands of expediency: a wise man is one who makes his bearing towards his fellow-men adjust itself to the sweep of the broadest eternal principles. In discerning and baffling the designs and petty aims of expediency in others, Goethe was a knowing man: in his own ends and means he was a wise man.

The *Divan*, lifted on the gradually self-refining judgments of criticism, has now taken its lasting place among the choice creations of poetic Art, uniquely enjoyed because, under a capitivating mask of Orientalism, it combines solidity with grace, depth with lightness, wisdom with wit. By some of Goethe's contemporaries it was disparaged as unpatriotic and far-fetched: unpatriotic, because begun during the war of liberation in 1813; far-fetched, on ac-

count of its Eastern dress. But Goethe was usually much in advance of his public, and the appreciation of him to-day has been reached through the culture which his own writings contributed the most to give. To Goethe public approval was grateful, but not necessary as a spur to production. He wrote because he must write: he yielded to a strong inward motion: when his mind was full it overran in fresh streams of verse or prose. His whole life's experience taught him that the first utterances about new poetry are little apt to flow from sympathy chastened by judgment, and are often the voice of ignorance envenomed by envy, of semi-culture perverted by conceit. Goethe wrote for himself and his friends. He makes Tasso say:

> "Who does not see the world in his few friends
> Deserves not that the world should hear of him."

Among Goethe's cardinal qualities was his capacity for and joy in admiration. To discover excellence is the best function of criticism. Culture will not make a clever man a good critic, unless he have the gift of admiration. Only he who can admire has the right to censure; for, imperfection or defect implying a perfection or wholeness, the critic must first be able to perceive this wholeness before he can discern wherein it has been fallen short of.

This principle is the life of ethics as of æsthetics. The man who values not the good and great is no judge of conduct. False admirations abound in this as in other provinces, and false admirations are another source of bad criticism. Good criticism involves admiration enlightened by cultivated intellect, and Goethe, himself the prince of critics, is the best master one can go to, to learn how to judge of Goethe's proficiencies and felicities, and through them of his failings. The range of his æsthetic performances, and of his successes, is wider than that of any worker in literature. He is not less abundant in comment than creativeness. By precept as well as by practice he gives the highest lessons in the art of literary appreciation. Among the various *genera* of poetic forms he leaps from peak to peak with a winged ease which surprises the critic into admiration. Let the student, who is equipped for such alterations of atmosphere, read *Iphigenia* after finishing *Hermann and Dorothea*, or pass from *Werther* to the *Divan*, and consider the span of the life-arc, both in time and mental orbit, which unites these two, or lay down *Tasso* to take up *Faust*, or, after an hour spent over the finest lyrics in the world, enjoy a score of pages in the *Metamorphoses of Plants*.

Genius will not be circumscribed. But Goethe could not escape the law of life, that the spirit breathed into the poet from his infancy to his manhood is the one he must breathe out again, and with the more force and veracity the higher and the more passionate is his poetic mood. With all his admiration of Grecian Art he could not write a Greek tragedy, — that was a psychical impossibility; and so, to appease his yearning, he snatched from the Greeks one of their most illustrious heroines, and made a Christian of her.

Was the original Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, so large and lofty an individuality that she belongs not to Greece but to mankind? By no means. But Goethe re-created her, and in so doing he necessarily unpaganized her. Besides belonging to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Goethe was personally too deeply dyed with tenderness, too saturated with the milk of human kindness, not to make the divine principle of love dominate in a conjunction like that in Tauris between Thoas and Iphigenia. To strike him with horror, and thus oblige him to desist from his purpose of making her his bride, Goethe's Iphigenia says to King Thoas: —

"Listen: of Tantalus' dark breed am I."

Then is evolved to his ears the series of terrific crimes committed by her ancestors, crimes whose bloody ruthlessness and ferocious egotism make a very matrix for tragedy; in this case, tragedy so tangled, that the sole issue out of it is by heaping death upon death. But all this lurid gloom forms but a remote background for the scene. Goethe's Iphigenia has not in her an artery, not the finest capillary, pulsating with this turbid, guilty blood. She is a beautifully spiritual impersonation, and illustrates, as though she were designed for the purpose, the contrast between the grim fatalism of Greece and the fair possibilities of a genuinely Christian control. During her long services as priestess in Diana's temple she has made Thoas forego his cruel custom of the sacrifice of strangers who happened upon his shore, and finally that of her brother Orestes and his friend Pylades, with whom he allows her to depart in peace, after a concluding scene of surpassing beauty, deeply imbued with purest sentiment. Goethe's work is an exquisite modern poem (written by a poet of these latter times, it could not be exquisite were it not modern in spirit) wrought out of ancient materials into the form of a drama. In its outpourings of passionate personal feelings it is su-

perbly lyrical, in its narrative passages grandly epic. If it be rather a lyric expansion in dialogue than a drama, it is nevertheless a genuine and a classic poem, classic not because its theme and form are ancient, but through the chasteness of its execution, through the fine fitness of language to thought and sentiment ranging on a high plane of mental endeavor in a warm atmosphere. In *Iphigenia* Goethe fulfills the requirements which Milton put into a parenthesis, that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate;" and he fulfills other and higher requirements. Out of these Grecian materials Goethe, by the potency of his art, has wrought a genuine poem; nevertheless, to put into the mouth of the daughter of Agamemnon, of Iphigenia in Tauris, the sentiments she here utters, and to make her rule herself by them, is an historical solecism.

*Tasso* and *Iphigenia*, because they belong to the same period of Goethe's poetic activity, are generally ranked together. Like *Iphigenia*, *Tasso* is its own justification. Its inspiration is equal to its art. It is full of the life of character, full of wisdom, of intuitional beamings, and of golden sheaves of experience, full of intellectual and sentimental delicacies and brilliancies. But it is not a drama proper; it is a

poem in dialogue, the dialogue being divided into acts instead of chapters. It is an evolution of feeling in words, and in deeds too, but it has not, any more than *Iphigenia*, the lively, continuous, booming action which drama implies. Its dominant tone being lyrical, it has no dramatic shock of incidents, no shifting interaction of conflicting personages, each striving for, and striking for his own ; but it has a deep and captivating interplay of strong emotions, the shock of inward conflicts, the overflow of passionate feeling, wrought into scenes vivid and varied, and stamped with beauty of form. One would not have it other than it is, being, as it is, an original poem shaped into clear, warm utterance.

In *Tasso* there are only five personages. To draw the two principal, the antagonistic characters, Tasso and Antonio, Goethe split himself into two. Without the poetic gift and the humane feelings which chasten it, Goethe were an Antonio ; without the keen, practical understanding, he were a Tasso.

On his return to Weimar from Italy Goethe was relieved from the heavier ministerial duties. Control over the Scientific and Artistic Institutions he retained, over Museums, Mines, Libraries, the Botanical Garden in Jena, and

the theatre. Before leaving Italy he wrote to the Duke expressing a wish such as only a Goethe could entertain, characteristic alike of his breadth and his dutifulness: "I should like, immediately on my return, to travel all through your territory as a foreigner, so that I might be able to form a judgment with fresh eyes, practiced in the survey of other countries. After my fashion I should get a new image of the whole, attain a complete conception, and thus qualify myself, as it were anew, for any kind of service which your kindness or your confidence might require of me."

A man of genius, to be himself, to have joy in his being, must submit him to the demands, even to the delicate hints, of genius. For his own peace' sake he must strive, through whatever obstacles, to satisfy his mental yearnings. Most fortunate is he whom, thus genially possessed, outward circumstances favor, instead of hampering and obstructing. Thus favored was Goethe. As minister and chief member of the court of Weimar, he had at times to go with and to do with others, when he would rather have been self-wrapped and secluded. But this was for him a small forfeiture, enjoying as he did the full sympathy, as well as the considerate friendship, of the Duke. In our day we

have seen the illustrious Humboldt bound by much coarser cords to the military, prosaic court of Berlin. Moreover, the poet and the man of science, Goethe not only carried his better self always with him, he put the rudder into the hands of this better self, even when conditions seemed adverse. We saw him on the voyage between Naples and Palermo fasten upon his *Tasso*. In the summer of 1790 he had to attend the Duke to a military camp in Silesia; but here, instead of wasting his time on princes and field marshals, he gave up the whole of him to Comparative Anatomy. Amid the sounds of trumpets, the stir of reviews and marchings, in the focus of a gay, showy, animated, socially elevated circle, he lived the life of a hermit. His devotion to this department of Natural Science dated its first impulse from Venice, where, walking one day on the Lido, he fell upon a sheep's skull, "so favorably cleft," he relates, "that it not only confirmed me in a discovery I had already made, namely, that the bones of the skull are transformed vertebræ," but pointed to other new and valuable observations, and strengthened his belief, founded on experience, "that Nature has no secret which she does not somewhere lay bare before the eyes of the attentive observer." The attentive

observer here implies one furnished in a more than ordinary degree with what may be called the scientific faculty *par excellence*, that high intellectual gift, namely, which enables the beholder to seize analogies. This gift, be it here said, united with his imitative instinct, contributed largely to the remarkable elasticity of Goethe's style.

One of Goethe's enduring delights was, to watch and hearken to sleepless, life-bubbling Nature, learning her benignant laws, noting her prodigalities, how her procedures are always as logical as they are beautiful. And so he too had a right to say, as his great countryman Kepler said: "I think the thoughts of God." I stated just now that Goethe was fortunate in his surroundings; and that surely he was, after full allowance has been made for what himself did towards creating and moulding them; for in Goethe there was so much life that he awakened and attracted life. He was a centre about which congenial men liked to move. Thus he had as correspondents men of science and men of letters, and early friends and later friends and men of the world, whom his genius and character drew to him and held to him, and to whom he could outpour his best without restraint and be sure of interest and

recognition. But besides this he had near him (a purely fortuitous proximity) the Duchess Louise, the wife of his chief, to whom, as well as to the Duke himself, he could impart his profoundest or subtlest suggestions and conclusions, assured, through intimate knowledge of her, that they would be hospitably received. In 1786 he writes to the Duchess: "The smallest product of Nature has the round of its consummation complete within itself; and I only need eyes to see that it is so, to discover all its conditions, and to feel sure that within a small circle there lies inclosed an entire, real existence. A work of Art, on the contrary, has its consummation without itself; the best of it is in the idea of the Artist, which he seldom or never reaches; all the rest is in certain accepted laws which, to be sure, are derived from the nature of Art and handicraft, but which are still not so easy to comprehend and decipher as the laws of living Nature. As to works of Art much is tradition; works of Nature are always like a freshly uttered word of God." Happy Duchess, who had such a poet-friend! Happy poet, who, in the wife of his sovereign, had such a woman-friend!

At the opening of his literary career, before he quitted Frankfort for Weimar, Goethe

planned *Egmont*, working on it at intervals and finishing it in Italy. As in *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*, there is in *Egmont* an unfolding of character and events from within, by quiet talk, rather than by diversified, oppugnant action. The reader has a masterly picture of the state of Brussels just before and after the arrival of Alva, of the conflicting interests, parties, personages, but not presented through deeds and lively collisions. To be effective as dramas, historical subjects should cover some space, so as to have occurrences enough to give room for variety of outward movement, the dramatist artfully compressing a succession of events into one frame, foreshortening them for dramatic unity and picturesque effects. *Egmont*, like Goethe's other higher works, is admirable as a poetic creation (poetic though *Egmont* is written in prose); but as a drama it does not keep that balance between the outward and inward, the keeping of which is one of the secrets of Shakespeare's mastership. Goethe's tragedies are too inward for dramatic effectiveness; the will is not put forth muscularly enough, one might say. For the drama, — not for narrative prose fiction, — his personages lack sinew. One need for a dramatic success is condensation; characteristics being

evolved gradually, it may be, but, in the midst of profluent action, breaking through in acts as well as smiting lines.

The lyrical proclivity of Goethe is exhibited in the intrusion of Claerchen into this play. Here is an historical tragedy, wrought out of one of the most momentous and most tragic crises in European annals, where all hearts are stirred to their depths by strongest passions, passions personal, political, religious; and now the protagonist of this great epoch, whose whole soul should be engrossed with his high duties and difficulties, him the dramatist drags aside, and makes him the hero of a love episode, and a fictitious love episode, diverting attention from the rapid current of tumultuous minatory movements, to fix it upon Claerchen. Is not this as false in Art as it is untrue to history? Goethe executed all love-stories so admirably, and through them the characters involved, that his power and partiality tempted him to bring into *Egmont* a tender element, as extraneous as it is unseasonable. Owing too to this, Egmont as an historical personage is not fully drawn. His brave, heedless side is given in the following sentences, which translate themselves readily into verse:

"Already dead is he who only lives
For his dear safety's sake."

"As if by unseen spirits whipped, speed on
Time's sun-steeds with the light car of our fate."

Claerchen, whose presence is a blotch on an historic tragedy, turns out to be its chief beauty, through the perfectness of her presentation. In her song Goethe does what is the essence of all song: he takes the soul of a feeling and flings it up to the surface in a glittering, transparent spray. It is a foam snatched from the heave of a deep ocean, through whose momentary crest a heavenly light is made to flash. The following translation will at least help the reader to form a notion of this famous song.

"Joyful
And doleful,
With thoughto'erful brain;
Yearning
And burning
In mutable pain;
Heaven-high shouting,
To death now depressed;
Happy alone
Is the soul by love blessed."

Thirty years ago I knew at Pisa, among other Professors in the University there, one of the youngest and ablest, Silvestro Centofanti. Signor Centofanti lectured on the history of

philosophy, and at times with a warm and sonorous eloquence that thrilled his audience. In treating of the Ionian philosophers he had opportunities, of which he availed himself copiously, to hold before his hearers the priceless blessings of freedom, and, by the example of the Greeks, to inculcate what sacrifices a people should make for national independence; thus nobly using his chair to instill into the youth of Italy principles of duty and patriotism. He was one of those thoughtful, high-souled Italians who boldly sowed the precious seed which has since yielded so rich a harvest.

The manly, fervid nature of Alfieri, and his patriotic spirit, besides his great literary services to Italy, so won the consonant heart of Signor Centofanti, that he had just published an edition of the tragedies and the autobiography of Alfieri. In a critical introduction, describing the literary procedure of the Italian dramatist, he states that each of his tragedies Alfieri first wrote out fully in prose, and then versified it, thus translating, as it were, the whole, line for line, from prose into verse. I said to the Professor, "Is that the way to write poetry?" I repeat the question here. Could one in the mood, the visionary mood, in which alone poetry can be written, write in prose what is

worthy of rhythmic verse? If he puts down in prose what is thus worthy, is it not solely because he is not enkindled, cannot be enkindled, to the due temperature for poetry? Is Alfieri a poet in the truest, closest sense of the word? Is he one who, through imaginative intensity of grasp, from inward vivacity and fullness, recreates, and freshly projects, in forms of beauty, scenes and passions and personages? Was his not rather an energetic, fervent, aspiring nature, with more of passion than emotion, of a poetic temperament, but with rhetorical rather than poetic gifts?

Goethe wrote *Iphigenia* and *Tasso* first in prose. But why did he so? Because, he says at the time, "Our prosody is in the greatest uncertainty. It is striking that in our language we have few syllables which are decidedly short or long: the others one uses according to taste or caprice." He found on trial that he could soon get such mastery over the iambic blank verse, the best dramatic medium, as to give it the stability he required; and no doubt he was urged to the trial by the poetic mood which the loving, beaming, presence of two such themes awakened. The themes are both, as subjects for drama, limited in action and the number of participant personages. This is

even the case with *Egmont*. The drama prefers a wider field and more numerous agents, in order to give scope to various movement and accumulating action. The absence of this scope in Goethe's dramas proves a lyrical preponderance in the flow of his æsthetic currents. In depicting persons and passions his genius delighted more in the inward than the outward. With all his full interior springs of passion and sensibility, he brought to his æsthetic work some of the calm contemplativeness of the man of science. At the same time, his characterization — that touchstone, on one side, of dramatic competency — is, in his best delineations, not even surpassed by Shakespeare. In Goethe's pictures and impersonations there is an outfilled, vivid roundness, a buoyancy and healthiness, which are due to the arterial vitality and the manifoldness of his faculties, all made elastic and malleable by the warmth of his sensibility to the beautiful. Shakespeare's preëminence comes mainly from the oceanic occult movement beneath, an incessant heave of power which imparts itself to all the multitudinous agitation of the surface, — an infinite latent motion, which underlies and penetrates the definite, diversified, external play. In Goethe this heave is only less powerful than in Shakespeare.

Like Shakespeare's, Goethe's knowledge came to him at first hand, through the warm, active, unintermitted commerce of his heart and intellect with the worlds of fact and feeling. He was always growing, because his resources of sensibility were inexhaustible. Men, women, girls, boys, babies, woods, flowers, fields, light and shade, storm and calm, sea and land, sorrow and joy, war and peace, pictures and statues, all the spectacles and mutations of life, its triumphs, cares, disappointments, successes, all of minute, infinite being taught him incessantly and abundantly, because he saw it not with the cold eye of the intellect alone, but also with the glowing eye of feeling. Of Goethe it may be said, that he enjoyed all sights and sensations, the poet accepting even the painful as pearls snatched from the heart of the man to be thrown into the casket of the Artist. He somewhere says that a man cannot enter a room where hangs an engraving, and go out with his mind in the state it was when he came in. What may be the effect of sorrow he has told in those four simple great lines which were a consolation to the Queen Louise of Prussia in her crushing afflictions :

> Wer nie sein brod mit traenen ass,
> Und weinend auf dem bette sass

Die langen kummervollen naechte,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himlischen Maechte.

Which may be literally translated without much loss: —

Who ne'er his bread with tear-drops ate,
And weeping on his bedside sate
Through the long night's grief-laden hours,
He knows you not, ye heavenly Powers.

## III.

### SCHILLER.

From what he beheld and went through Goethe carried away so much, because he brought with him so much. We have seen how large and varied was his experience in the first ten years at Weimar, what stores he gathered in Italy. I have now to record a quickening modification of his being through contact with one man, a contact which took place at an age when most men are past modification; for Goethe was forty-five (Schiller thirty-five) at the beginning of their correspondence and friendship.

For several years after Goethe's return from Italy, he avoided Schiller. Schiller was yet in a stage of literary development and activity which Goethe had so outgrown that on his own products of that term he looked, especially since his æsthetic enlargement in Italy, with distaste, almost with aversion. In vain their friends tried to bring them together. Schiller, on a visit to Weimar, lodged near Goethe: Goethe

did not seek or see him. The first time they met, and for several years the only time, was in 1788 at Rudolstadt, in general company, a few weeks after Goethe's arrival from Rome. Schiller, in a letter to Koerner, thus describes Goethe as he appeared to him on that occasion: —

"I can at last tell you something about Goethe. I passed nearly the whole of last Sunday in his society, on which day he paid us a visit with Madame Herder, Frau v. Stein, and Frau v. S. His appearance greatly lessened the idea I had conceived from hearsay of his imposing and handsome person. He is of middle height, and looks and walks stiff. His countenance is not open, but he has a beaming eye. The expression of his countenance is serious, at the same time that it is benevolent and kind. He has brown hair, and appears older than I should say he really is. His voice is exceedingly pleasing, and his conversation flowing, lively, and amusing. It is a pleasure to listen to him; and when he is in a happy mood, which he was on this occasion, he is fond of talking, and takes an interest in what he says. Our acquaintance was soon made, without the slightest formality on either side. The company was too numerous, and all were

too eager to catch a word from him, for me to be much alone with him, or to allow me to speak with him on other than commonplace topics. . . . .

"Altogether, the high opinion I had conceived of him is not in the least degree lessened by his personal acquaintance; but I doubt if we shall ever draw very close to each other. Many things that are still of interest to me, that I have still to wish and to hope for, have had their day with him. He is so far ahead of me, — not so much in years as in experience of the world and self-development, — that we cannot meet on the road. His whole life from the very beginning has run in a contrary direction to mine: his world is not my world: our notions on some points are diametrically opposed. But from so short an interview it is hard to form a judgment. Time will show."

Six years after this interview, at the close of a lecture on Natural Science in Jena, happening to come out together, they engaged in talk about the lecture. Goethe was pleased to hear Schiller declare that this piecemeal treatment of Science is not the way to make it attractive; whereupon Goethe said that there might be a way to present Nature, not cut up and isolated,

but living and actively striving out of the whole into the parts. Schiller expressed a doubt that such a presentation could spring out of experiment. By this time they had reached Schiller's door. Interest in the conversation carried Goethe in. There with animation he explained his theory of the metamorphoses of plants, and with a pen made a typical plant appear before Schiller's eyes. With the liveliest interest Schiller listened and looked; but at last, shaking his head, he said: "That is no result of experiment, that is an idea." Goethe was staggered, but collecting himself he rejoined: "I ought to be very thankful that I have ideas without knowing it, and can even see them with my eyes." Schiller was assuredly right: that out of which sprang the typical plant was an idea, if ever there was one. Nay more, with all his capacity for minute, patient observation and experiment, Goethe would never have written, or thought of writing, or been able to write, a page of his *Metamorphoses*, had he not been far more capable than most men of such ideas.

But the ice was broken. In the warmth of close personal contact thawed suddenly the coldness which had kept them so long apart. Describing, long afterwards, the interview, Goethe said: "The attractive power of Schil-

ler was great: he held fast whoever came near him. His wife, whom from childhood I had known and loved, did gladly her part to bind us together; our friends on both sides were rejoiced; and so, through the never-to-be-reconciled conflict between *object* and *subject*, was sealed a union that has remained unbroken, and has wrought much good for us and for others."

Goethe is called a realist and Schiller an idealist; but in this very matter of the typical plant Goethe unconsciously shows himself an idealist. In one of his first letters to Goethe, that remarkable fourth letter in which he sets forth with so much distinctness and penetration his, Goethe's, mental characteristics, Schiller speaks of his intuitional power, that is, his power of insight independent of experience and collected details. In fact, this commanding genial power of intuition it was which enlarged and vivified Goethe's capacity of experience. Some men, not without pretension and merit, have a limited capacity of experience; they do not keep learning, still less do they continue ever purifying their knowledge; and this limited capacity of experience and progression arises in great measure from their incapacity of ideas. Goethe had a great capacity of experience, but it was his capacity of ideas that made him generative, expansive, original.

Goethe was both *subjective* and *objective:* he was an idealist as well as a realist. The only safe idealist is your thorough realist, thorough, from having so many and such clear intellectual inlets, that realities stream upon him in all their variety and fullness, upbearing his idealism on a firm body of facts. Your mere realist is no realist; for realities cannot be seen just as they are without some light from the ideal, that is, from the imaginative heaven within. On the other hand, your mere idealist is no idealist; for his imaginations are not valid, idealism needing to be colored by injections from the earth's arteries, needing to be fortified by the stabilities of tried possibility.

The much that Goethe saw and partook of he could appropriate and assimilate because he felt so profoundly. His countless relations with the world of men and of things never confused or tyrannized over him, because he ruled all his resources from the throne of thought. He was ever drawing magnetism out of the earth, to mingle with the positive current flowing from his great interior battery, largely adjusted out of reason and sensibility. The collision it was of these two magnetisms, touched by the spark of the beautiful, which in science as well as in poetry flamed before the world

delineations and discoveries that are a beauty and a benefaction to his fellow-men forever.

On the nineteenth of June, 1794, three or four weeks after their meeting and talk in Jena, Schiller writes to Goethe inviting him, in the most cordial and flattering terms, to be one of the contributors to a new literary monthly Journal, *The Hours*, just about to be established, of which Schiller was to be Editor. In a note Goethe accepts in similar terms the invitation. Thus was begun a correspondence which was actively kept up for ten of the busiest, most productive years of both, ending only with the life of Schiller, and which is the richest epistolary treasure in literature. In his note, Goethe says: "A closer connection with such sterling men as the undertakers of this work will, I am sure, give new life to much that is now stagnant within me." And just this *The Hours* did for Goethe. What his friendship with Schiller did for him he states four years later in a letter to Schiller, which stands nearly midway between the beginning and the end of their correspondence, being numbered 401, and the last, dated April 24th, 1805, from Schiller to Goethe, being 971. "The friendly bond between us," writes Goethe in 1798, "has already been of great service to us, and I hope that it will con-

tinue to be so. If I have been to you as the representative of many objects, you have drawn me from the too close observation of outward things and their relations, and thrown me back upon myself. You have taught me to look more discerningly at the manysidedness of the inner man ; you have obtained for me a second youth, and made me a poet again, which I had as good as ceased to be."

A cordial relation and correspondence being established between them, they sought each other, and had long discussions on the high topics that were the mental aliment of both. After a visit of Goethe to Jena, Schiller writes on the twenty-third of August, 1794: "On much in regard to which I could not obtain perfect harmony within myself, the contemplation of your mind (die Anschauung Ihres Geistes), — for thus I must call the full impression of your ideas upon me, — has kindled in me a new light. I needed the *object*, the body, to many speculative ideas, and you have put me on the track of it. Your observing look, which rests so calmly and clearly on all things, keeps you from getting into the by-roads into which speculation, as well as an arbitrary imagination, obeying only itself, so easily goes astray. In your correct intuition lies all that

analysis so laboriously seeks, and only because it lies in you as a whole, is your own wealth concealed from yourself; for, alas! we only know that which we can take to pieces."

The fifth letter, dated August 27th, is from Goethe to Schiller, acknowledging the preceding one. I copy nearly the whole of it, it is so autobiographical.

"For my birthday, which falls in this week, no more acceptable present could have come to me than your letter, in which, with a friendly hand, you give the sum of my existence, and through your sympathy, encourage me to a more assiduous and active use of my powers.

"Pure enjoyment and real benefit can only be reciprocal, and it will give me pleasure to unfold to you at leisure what my intercourse with you has done for me, — how I, too, regard it as making an epoch in my existence, — and how content I am to have gone on my way without particular encouragement, as it now appears as if we, after a so unexpected meeting, are to proceed forward together. I have always prized the honest and so rare earnestness that is visible in all that you have written and done, and I may now expect to be made acquainted by yourself with the progress of your mind, particularly in the last few years.

Shall we have once made clear to each other the points to which we have thus far attained, we shall then be the better able, without interruption, to work on together.

"All that relates to me, and is in me, I will gladly impart. For, as I feel very sensibly that my undertaking far exceeds the measure of the faculties of one earthly life, I would wish to depose much with you, and thereby give it not only endurance, but vitality.

"Of how great profit will be to me a closer intercourse with you, yourself will soon perceive, when, on a near acquaintance, you discover in me a kind of obscurity and holding back, which I cannot entirely master, notwithstanding I am perfectly conscious of it. Like phenomena are often found in our nature, to whose government we unwillingly yield, when she is not too tyrannical.

"I hope soon to pass some time with you, and then we will talk over much together."

In dealing with these precious letters the difficulty is not to choose but to abstain. Here is an invitation from Goethe to Schiller, making part of a letter, dated September 4th, 1794.

"And here I have a proposal to make to you. Next week the court goes to Eisenach, and

for a fortnight I shall be alone and independent, as I have not a prospect of being soon again. Will you not, during this period, visit me, and lodge with me? You would be able to occupy yourself in quiet with any kind of work. At convenient hours we should talk together, see such friends as were the most congenial to us, and would part not without profit. You should live entirely after your own fashion, and be as much as possible as if you were in your own house. In this way I should be able to show you what is most valuable in my literary store, and many threads of connection would be joined between us. After the fourteenth you will find me free, and ready to receive you.

"Until then I will reserve much that I have to say, and in the mean time I wish you all happiness."

Here is Schiller's answer, at the opening of a long letter.

"JENA, *7th September*, 1794.

"With pleasure I accept your kind invitation, but with the earnest request, that in no particular of your household arrangements will you make any change with reference to me: for, alas! my spasms oblige me commonly to devote the whole morning to sleep, because they let

me have no rest at night, and, indeed, I am never well enough to be able in a whole day to count upon a fixed hour. I must, therefore, beg that I may be in your house as one who is not to be cared for, so that by being thus left to myself, I may escape the embarrassment of making any one else dependent upon my state of health. The arrangement which would make any other man comfortable, is my worst enemy; for, the being obliged to do a certain thing at a particular time is sure to render me unfit to do it.

"Pardon these preliminaries, which I must first settle, in order to make my staying with you even possible. I will request the poor liberty of being permitted to be an invalid in your house.

"I was just about to propose to you to pay me a visit when I received your invitation. My wife has gone with our child to spend three weeks at Rudolstadt, to avoid the small-pox with which Mr. Humboldt has had his children inoculated. I am quite alone, and could lodge you very comfortably. Except Humboldt, I seldom see any one, and for a long time no metaphysics have crossed my threshold."

The interest of these letters lies as much in the exhibition of the cordial and courteous familiarity between two such men, as in the abundance and brightness of the good things that are interchanged on the high themes which first drew them together, the living in and for which made the chief joy of their lives. Poets and thinkers both, earnest, active, conscientious literary workers, both, at the opening of their correspondence and friendship, intent on giving character to a new journal, the choice topics in art, literature, philosophy, in addition to piquant personalities and witty thrusts, naturally come often up in their letters, to be touched with epistolary buoyancy and grace, but at the same time with the firmness and judgment of sterling criticism.

The following brief note from Goethe shows how thoroughly he did his work.

"For the *Advocate*, who here appears, I wish a good reception.

"Have the goodness to send it soon back to me, because I want to go through it several times more for the sake of the style.

"I am working everything out of the way that might hinder me from soon enjoying and instructing myself by your side.

"WEIMAR, 19*th March*, 1795."

With easy fullness and certain grace flowers tip with light a whole zone of stalks in spring; but what a vast, mysterious, constructive might lies behind this facile beauty! So with shining thoughts in the extemporaneous utterances of genial minds: they come forth with a happy readiness which diverts us from thinking of the divine depths whence only can such be upthrown.

The temptation to make many long extracts I withstand, as not suited to the compass of the present volume, and select a few gems of criticism or comment, whose rays reveal the interiors whence they issue. Goethe thus closes a letter of May 14th, 1795: "Have you seen the treatise on style in the plastic arts in the April number of the *Mercury?* That on which we are all agreed is very well said; but, that the writer should assert that genius, which exists in the philosopher prior to all experience, does not pull him and warn him when with imperfect experience he sits down to prostitute himself!"

On sending Schiller a distich, Goethe says: "How serious every trifle becomes the moment one treats it according to the principles of Art, I have on this occasion again experienced."

To *Lawrence Stark*, a novel by Engel, very current just then, Schiller gives a loud slap: "It has the merit of having a light tone, but it is rather the lightness of the hollow than of the beautiful. When minds like E.'s wish to be true and *naif* they run such danger of being flat. But, most divine flatness! that is the very thing that recommends them."

Both were dissatisfied with what Herder said of German Literature in a volume just published. Goethe concludes a paragraph on the volume with words which can hardly be too often reprinted: "It may be owing to my mood at the time, but it seems to me that, as well in treating of writings as of actions, unless one speaks with a loving sympathy, a certain partial enthusiasm, the result is so defective as to have very little value. Pleasure, delight, sympathy in things, is all that is real, and that reproduces reality: all else is empty and in vain."

At the close of a letter of July 9th, 1796, we get a cheering look into Goethe's heart and household: "Greet your dear wife. Could you not, in case of an increase of your family, send Charles over here? Augustus would give him a hearty welcome, and he would be very happy in the company of the many children that assemble at my house and garden. Farewell."

One of those base and malignant natures, whom the facilities of the press enable to aim their dirt (it never reaches its aim) at the worthy and the exalted, had written about Goethe some personality so low that Schiller calls it "filthy." Goethe thus ends a short, calm comment thereon: "How little this kind of people even dream in what an inaccessible castle that man dwells who is always in earnest in regard to himself and everything around him."

The union of Goethe and Schiller in literary as well as personal friendship, amicable, animating, reciprocally serviceable rivals, being united at the top through their aspirations, — this union, while it quickened their productiveness, stimulated detraction. Prosaic, incompetent writers (whose name is always legion), envious because incompetent, presumptuous because prosaic, could ill brook the growing predominance of two such men. In journals, in pamphlets and other forms, the two were pertinaciously assailed. Against such attacks the best weapon is witty ridicule; and so, in the shape of what they called *Xenia*, — a term borrowed from Martial, — Goethe and Schiller launched at their detractors showers of epigrams, pinning to the wall with a distich many a scribbling

wasp. In the German literary world of that day the *Xenia* made a lively stir. Of the epistolary comments which the two friends interchanged on these assailants I make room for the following, from Goethe in December, 1796: "To be candid, however, the conduct of these people is altogether what I wish; for it is a policy not sufficiently known and practiced, that whoever makes pretensions to any posthumous fame, should force his contemporaries to out with whatever they have against him. The impression made thereby he always effaces by his presence, his life and activity. Of what avail was it to many a discreet, meritorious and clever man, whom I have outlived, that, through incredible compliance, passiveness, flattery, advancing and retiring, he obtained a tolerable reputation during his life? The instant he is dead, the Devil's attorney plants himself by the side of the corpse, and the angel, who is there to be his counterpart, wears mostly a very sorrowful visage."

The two brothers Schlegel, Augustus William and Frederick, did good service in their day to literature, and A. W.'s *History of Dramatic Literature* (written, however, long after this period) has deservedly survived. They were both prone to pretend beyond their de-

serts, an amusing instance of which pretension is related in Moore's *Diary*. At a dinner at the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in London, in 1832, on the death of Goethe being announced, and some one saying that Germany had now no great poet left, A. W. Schlegel exclaimed: "I am a German Poet!" In May, 1797, Schiller thus writes of Frederick Schlegel: "Have you read Schlegel's critique on Schlosser? It is, to be sure, in its fundamental principles, not untrue, but the evil intent and party spirit are much too apparent in it. This Mr. Frederick Schlegel is really getting too bad. He lately told Humboldt that he had reviewed *Agnes* in the journal *Germany*, and very severely too; but that now, since he hears that it is not by you, he regrets that he handled it so roughly. So the coxcomb thinks it his duty to take care that your taste fall not off. And this impudence is coupled with such ignorance and shallowness, that he really took *Agnes* to be your work.

"The gossip about the *Xenia* continues. I am constantly meeting with a new title of a book, wherein an essay or something similar is announced against the *Xenia*. Lately I found an article against them in a journal called *Annals of Suffering Humanity*."

Writing to Goethe's friend Meyer in July, 1797, Schiller thus speaks of *Hermann and Dorothea* and its author: "Nor have we in the mean time been inactive, as you know, and least of all our friend, who in the last few years has really surpassed himself. His epic poem you have read: you will admit that it is the pinnacle of his and all our modern art. I have seen it grow up, and have wondered almost as much at the manner of its growth as at the completed work. Whilst the rest of us are obliged painfully to collect, in order slowly to bring forth anything passable, he has but gently to shake the tree, in order to have fall to him the most beautiful fruit, ripe and heavy. It is incredible with what ease he now reaps upon himself the fruits of a well-bestowed life and a persistent culture; how significant and sure now all his steps are; how the clearness as to himself and as to objects, preserves him from every idle effort and beating about."

From Frankfort Goethe writes in August of the same year: "It struck me as very remarkable what the peculiar character of the public in a large city is. It lives in an incessant tumult of getting and spending, and that which we call high mood can neither be produced nor communicated. All pleasures, even the the-

atre, are intended only to distract (*zerstreuen*), and the great fondness of the reading public for journals and novels arises precisely thence, that the former always, and the latter mostly, bring distraction to distraction.

"I even think I have remarked a kind of shyness towards poetic productions, or, at least, in so far as they are poetic, which, from these causes, appears to me quite natural. Poetry requires, nay, exacts, collectedness; it isolates man against his will; it forces itself on the attention repeatedly, and is in the broad world (not to say the great world) as inconvenient as a faithful mistress."

The important critical judgment uttered in the subjoined extract, condemns some of Goethe's own dramatic practice, and no doubt his infringement of a fundamental principle helped to make its truth so clear to him. The principle is, that a subject which is not capable of lifting itself into rhythm is not a fit subject for dramatic treatment. It may be that he lays down the law too strictly, and that comedy and farce can be genuine in prose. But he is backed by Shakespeare, who, as if to authorize and emphasize the principle, besides making verse predominate in most of his comedies, introduces it into several scenes even of the *Merry*

*Wives of Windsor.* The mere prose drama creeps along the ground among the individualities of a subject, the bustling crowd of details, weaving its texture out of a succession of occasions. The poetic drama, dealing with effects and causes, not with mere occasions, converts many particulars into a few generalities. By extracting the essence out of much, the spirit out of a pile of material, it rises to the plane of poetry. Thus the truly poetic drama becomes representative, unlimited, unconsciously symbolical. The letter of Goethe is so alive with sound criticism, as sound and in much as applicable to-day as in 1797, that I give a large portion of it. This letter is dated November 25, 1797.

"For letter and package, which I have this moment received, I thank you cordially, and only say in haste and impromptu, that I am not only of your opinion, but even go much further. Whatever is poetical should be treated rhythmically. That is my conviction, and the belief, that by degrees a poetical prose might be introduced, only shows that the difference between prose and poetry is entirely lost sight of. It is no better than if some one should order to be made in his park a lake that could be drained, and the landscape-gardener endeav-

ored to execute the order by forming a marsh. What is neither one thing nor the other is for amateurs and dabblers, just as marshes are for amphibious animals. In the mean time the evil has become so great in Germany, that no one any longer sees it; nay, like that scrofulous people that is told of, they rather look upon a healthily made neck as a punishment from God. All dramatic works (and perhaps comedy and farce generally) should be rhythmical, and we should then sooner see who could do something. For the present, however, nothing is left to the dramatic poet but to accommodate himself to public taste; and in this sense you could not be blamed if you chose to write your *Wallenstein* in prose; do you however regard it as a self-dependent work, then it must necessarily become rhythmical.

"At all events we are obliged to forget our age, if we wish to work according to our convictions; for, such a shallow vulgarity in principles as at present prevails has assuredly never before been in the world."

One more extract I must make from these hearty, thoughtful, wise, lively letters, — the opening of Schiller's answer to the above, dated November 28, 1797. We know with what modesty Goethe spoke of Shakespeare: here we

have a glimpse of how the greatest of poets impressed Schiller: "With your *Elegy* you have again given us great pleasure; it belongs so truly to the pure poetic species, as through so simple a means, through a sportful use of the subject, it stirs up the deepest and points to the highest. May many such moods cheer you in these gloomy, oppressive days, which to you also I know are so fatal. I need all my elasticity, in order to make myself air and room against the down-weighing heavens.

"I read lately the Shakespearean pieces which treat of the War of the Two Roses, and am now, after finishing *Richard the Third*, filled with amazement. This last is one of the sublimest tragedies that I know, and at this moment I could not say whether even any other one of Shakespeare can rank before it. The great destinies, woven in the preceding pieces, are ended in this in a truly great manner, and they connect themselves together according to the most sublime idea. That the subject of itself excludes entirely the tender, the melting, the tear-moving, assists this high effect: everything therein is energetic and great; naught common disturbs the pure æsthetic emotion; and it is, as it were, the pure form of the dread tragic that one enjoys."

Through passages cited from their letters the reader knows what the two thought they had learnt one from the other, how much they had been to each other. The expression of their obligations was probably heightened by profound personal esteem and reciprocal admiration. The passage from Goethe, recording what he deemed he owed to Schiller, is from a letter dated in the fourth year of their correspondence. Something, doubtless, each gave to his friend, the strong side of one supplementing, in some degree, the weak side of the other. But the most teemful consequence of their friendship was the stimulus it lent to their powers through earnest, incessant, close coöperation. The great service Literature owes to their intimacy is, that it brought out of each the best there was in him. The sympathy of such a friend as a Goethe was to a Schiller, and a Schiller to a Goethe, warmed the faculties of either, kindling the inward man to his utmost heat. Their joint high, zealous endeavors after poetic excellence braced and pruned the strength of either by uniting them as one man, while each kept to his own path. When they got on the slippery track of the *Xenia* they were as thoroughly interfused as hostile Indians on a trail: their shrewdest foes could not distinguish their

footmarks. Sometimes one named the subject and the other executed it: sometimes one wrote the first line, his friend the second.

When in 1797 Goethe came back from a journey to Switzerland, he brought, among other poetic booty, hints for an epic poem on William Tell. By often talking over the plan and scenery with Schiller, the subject took such hold of his friend, that Schiller projected a drama with Tell for the hero, while Goethe — the subject having lost its novelty, and the to him indispensable secrecy as a poetic theme — readily gave it up to Schiller, who wrought out of it one of his best tragedies, weaving in with fidelity and effect, through Goethe's description, the grand physical lineaments of the Four Cantons. When Schiller was writing his *Wallenstein*, Goethe inspirited him with his sympathy: Schiller gave the same refined aid to Goethe in his *Wilhelm Meister*.

In the literary lives of Goethe and Schiller the year 1797 is called the Ballad year. In friendly rivalry the two wrote some of their best ballads; and for getting a clear view of the æsthetic difference between them there is no readier way than to study these. Schiller's ballads are incidents poetized, incidents with feeling in them, for else they could not be poet-

ized. Goethe's are feeling actualized in poetic forms. With Schiller the main thing is the incident, with Goethe the sentiment. Hence Schiller's ballads are momentarily more exciting than Goethe's, but not so warm, and not so significant. In the best of Goethe's there lies coiled a deeper, a more generic moral meaning, or, through the awe they cause, they make the reader feel the unseen. Goethe had a boundless faith : he held firmly to that invisible chain which binds man consciously to the unknown. Faith may be called a spiritual gravitation, which holds us to our place relatively to the creative power whence we are.

Compare two of the shorter ballads, *The Glove*, by Schiller, and *The Faithless Boy*, by Goethe. Love is the subject of both. In *The Glove*, the court of the French king and knights and ladies sit in an amphitheatre to witness a combat between lions and tigers and leopards. A lady drops her glove between a lion and a tiger crouching near each other, and then mockingly challenges her lover to fetch the glove. The knight descends into the arena, picks it up, and, in answer to the warm smile of love from the lady, tosses the glove in her face. This ballad has been translated by Merivale, and by Dwight in his admirable vol-

ume. *The Faithless Boy*, by Goethe, is given in the joint volume of his "Poems and Ballads," by Aytoun and Martin. I make the following translation, which is, I think, closer to the text and to the simplicity of the original:—

There was a stripling, saucy, bold,
From France he came but newly,
Who oft a poor young girl did fold
In the arms of love too truly;
Had pressed her fondly to his side,
And jested of her as his bride,
And after all deserted.

When the girl learnt she was betrayed,
Her senses from her parted;
She laughed and wept, and swore and prayed,
And thus her soul departed.
That was to him a heavy day,
It turned his hair from brown to gray,
And drove him forth to wander.

He struck the spurs into his steed,
Through every cross-road gliding
Hither and thither, with wildest speed;
Can find no rest by riding.
Seven days and seven nights he rode:
It lightened, thundered, crashed and blowed;
The floods are out and raging.

He rides into the lightning's teeth,
Up to a wall he rideth,
And ties his horse and creeps beneath,
And from the rain he hideth.
And as he taps from side to side,

Right under him the earth gapes wide:
He plunges down a hundred fathom.

And as he comes to from the blow,
He sees three tapers blinking,
He lifts him and he crawleth low;
The lights go further winking:
This way and that they lead him round,
Now up, now down, and underground,
Through broken, dreary caverns.

Then, of a sudden, in a hall
By hundred guests he's greeted;
Their hollow eyes smile on him all;
They nod him to be seated.
And there among them meets his sight
The maiden dear, all clad in white,
She turneth —

What homeliness and simplicity are here, and at the same time what ideality! How the elements are made to fulminate against a breach of the most sacred of trusts! Could human voice proclaim with more emphasis, with a deeper cry of the soul, — "You are above, you justicers?" And how rapid is the action: in only forty-two short lines what a tale and what a moral is compressed! And, as it ever should be in poetry, the moral lies modestly nestled behind the æsthetic beauty and grandeur. Poetry, says Goethe, "is the true expression of an excited, exalted soul without aim or purpose." The soul, in its uplifted states, will, without aim

or purpose, and more surely than with them, utter the deepest moral and spiritual truth. The legitimate effect of a poem, as of all genuine Art, is, to impart to the reader or beholder some of that exaltation out of which it sprang. Thus it lifts him above himself, and so becomes effectively and nobly moral in its influence. Only in these elevated, inspired, and therefore self-forgetting moods can true poetry be produced; and then deep meanings come spontaneously, often deeper than the writer knew of at the moment of writing. He who *strives* to say deep things never says them. So of the beautiful: if a man of thought and feeling be inwardly illuminated by his susceptibility thereto, this illumination will show itself outwardly in fresh, exquisite images and conceptions, which come to him unsought and unexpected.

In Goethe the inward depth was deeper than in Schiller, and hence the richer meaning, the wider bearing, of his ballads and other shorter poems. Schiller worked more through the understanding in conjunction with the sense of the beautiful; Goethe more through the sensibilities. Thence Schiller was always casting about for subjects, for incidents or life-passages, which while they are striking have enough generic quality and sentiment in them

to bear being versified. Goethe experienced no such want of subjects, because his were drawn from an inexhaustible within. Subjects, indeed, crowded upon him more numerously than he could execute. "No one," he declares, "can furnish subjects to the poet: nay, he often blunders in choosing them himself."

Schiller's poetic procedure was to realize his ideal through the individual, a procedure which is sound and successful when you have individuals to idealize. *The power of individualization is the creative power.* This lies at the base of all thorough poetic work. The individual, whether thing, sentiment, incident, or person, being first clearly conceived, must be held in the grasp of the mind, distinct, organic, specific, and then, by means of poetic imagination, that is imagination illuminated by the beautiful and steadied by the generic reason, he or it is brightened to the best whereof he or it is capable. In all poetry and Art this is the only legitimate idealization; for hereby, in your subtlest and loftiest ideals, you cling to the truth of nature. This power of individualization, in which lay the primary strength of Goethe, Schiller somewhat lacked. Hence Goethe's personages have in them more pulse and presence than Schiller's: among them-

selves they are differentiated distinctly; nor are they at all prosaic as individuals. If your personage is not specifically individualized, he is liable, when you descend upon him from your ideal heights, to be enveloped in a magnifying mist which, even if a golden mist, obscures and dislocates his lineaments, leaving him at the end a vague, loose figure, whom we cannot closely embrace with the arms of our love and admiration. The personages of Schiller's dramas partake, more or less, of this character; hence they have been called thought-creatures: they are somewhat hollow and unreal. Those of Goethe's are more soul-creatures, and thence more actual. As the ideal cannot be realized without the mind being first able to give birth to concrete individuals, so the real cannot be idealized, — which was Goethe's procedure, — without an idealizing and generalizing power. Goethe made the particular, the individual, represent, or at least point to, the universal; and he did this because the universal and absolute was organically native to his mind. The individual products of the earth you cannot see without the one universal Sun; and when by its light you are enabled to perceive them, you cannot fail to find that the Sun has been busy with them and all their parts.

In the beginning of 1805 Goethe and Schiller were both ill. Goethe had a presentiment that one of them would die. One day, when they had not met for several weeks, Schiller, having partly recovered, entered Goethe's sick room. They walked up to each other and earnestly embraced. For a time both rallied. At the end of April Goethe went to see Schiller: he found him just about going to the theatre. Goethe was not well enough to accompany him. The two friends parted at Schiller's door, never to meet again on earth.

A man of Goethe's sensibility, and of his affectionateness of nature as shown in many relations with his fellow-men, would of course be deeply moved by the loss of such a friend as Schiller. When, on the ninth of May, 1805, Schiller died, Goethe was enfeebled by long illness. Hereby his nervous tone was lowered. This depressed condition accounts for the touching manifestations of grief recorded just before Schiller's death. One day, during Schiller's illness, a friend of Goethe found him in tears pacing up and down his garden, and at night he was heard weeping. This record has its value, but is not needed to prove the genuineness and strength of Goethe's love for Schiller; and it testifies to the morbid state of

one whose discipline it was to bear up calmly under bereavement.

To Zelter, Goethe wrote: "I thought to lose myself, and instead of that I lose a friend, and in him the half of my being." In order to engross his mind, to divert his thoughts from his loss, to continue co-working with his friend, and thus keep him still genially present, he resolved to take up and finish *Demetrius*, a tragedy which Schiller had begun. They had often talked over the plan together, so that Goethe knew thoroughly Schiller's design. It was to be a monument to Schiller such as Goethe, and Goethe alone, could raise. But he could not set himself to the chosen task: his mind was unstrung for such work. The following extract from Goethe's *Year-Book* for 1805 describes his condition when he found he could not take up *Demetrius:* "Now for the first time I felt that he was gone: insupportable sorrow seized me; and as my bodily sufferings cut me off from all company, I was left in the saddest loneliness. My journals tell nothing of that period: the blank leaves denote the inward emptiness, and such minutes as are found testify that I just kept by the side of current occupations, without interest, and let them lead me instead of my leading them."

## IV.

### FRIENDSHIPS.

Before and after the ten years of intimacy with Schiller, as well as contemporaneously with that, Goethe had other friendships, to warm and expand him. In youth, among his friends were men older than himself; in maturest age, younger men. Friends he had, and could not be without, all through a long, prolific life. Sociable, kindly, and eminently attractive he was, and of that cheeriest hospitality which opens not doors only, but the mind. He had much to give, and he gave gladly to all who could receive his gifts. As in his intellectual structure there was capacity for broadest grasp and generalization, with acute talent for observing, in his feelings he united sympathy for all human being, enjoying or suffering, a constitutional love for man, with a ready attachment to individual men, and sharp preferences among those nearest him. "Pity," wrote Jung Stilling, one of his Strasbourg friends, "that so

few are acquainted with this noble man in respect of his heart."

Through a supreme instinct genius seizes its proper food, rejecting what is unserviceable or noxious. Goethe was thrown early upon himself. He was not seventeen when he entered the University of Leipzig. The student at a German University is his own master: the precious, priceless hours are his, to do with them what he will. Leipzig, besides being the seat of a University, was a lively commercial centre. To young men, just emancipated from pedagogic discipline and parental presence, such a town is profuse of opportunities, of invitations, of enticements. That of these Goethe yielded mostly to the fair, and from the foul got experience and no permanent tainture, was due, not solely to the healthy natural selection of genius, but to a fundamental rectitude of nature, which, through all the extravagancies and seeming lawlessness of his youth, kept him from damaging aberrations, and held him to a forward and upward course. A boy in years, he was a man through native common sense and precocious thoughtfulness, as well as from an interior tropical glow of temperament.

A youth, overflowing with animal spirits, full of life, curiosity, geniality, impressible and

beautiful, would not fail to attract and be attracted. Around him was soon a circle of the ripe and the unripe, of both sexes, to whom he gave and from whom he received. His most serviceable friend was Frau Boehme, wife of a professor, one of those paragons of womanly being enfolded in an atmosphere of grace, through which shine intelligence and feminine helpfulness. By her the untamed youth was subdued to conformity in his dress and bearing; and through her he also learnt the worthlessness of the poets he admired, and of his imitations of them. How fortunate was he, to have come within the radiance of such a woman: how blest was she, to meet in the wild student one so accessible to her fine instruction. Young people are so apt to be obtuse towards happy opportunities.

For what he learnt from Oeser, Director of the Drawing Academy, Goethe was grateful through life. Oeser had been the teacher and friend of Winckelman. In after years Goethe wrote to him: "What do I not owe to you for having pointed out to me the way of the True and the Beautiful!" Another Leipzig friend was Behrish, older than Goethe by a dozen years, who fed other wants of his hungry nature, — his love of jokes and of mystification.

Imaginative and sprightly, the strength of Behrish lay however, like that of Merk, a later friend of Goethe, on the negative side.

That he might become a thorough lawyer, Goethe was in his twentieth year transferred by his father from the University of Leipzig to that of Strasbourg. There, too, he became the centre of a circle which he animated. There, too, the most valuable friendship he formed was with one older than himself, with Herder. That, notwithstanding Herder's peevishness and jealousies, this friendship lasted till his death, was probably owing to the strong hold Goethe got in Strasbourg on his heart. Herder had come to Strasbourg on account of a disease of the eyes. When an operation was performed on them, Goethe was at his side, and sat with him twice a day, morning and evening, during a long convalescence. Later, when they had both lived years in close proximity, Herder wrote to Knebel of Goethe: "He carries his head and his heart always in the right place, and in every step of his life he is a man."

Easy fidelity to the conditions and duties of friendship was a marked trait in Goethe. In Rome, when his friend Moritz broke an arm, Goethe nursed him. Of this he wrote thus

characteristically: "What I have experienced and learnt as watcher, confessor, and confidant of this sufferer, as his finance-minister and private secretary, may be of service to me hereafter. In those days the sharpest sorrows went hand in hand with the noblest enjoyments." But let any one try to do these acts so devotedly just for the sake of self-culture and the good it may bring him!

Goethe yearned for fellowship. He published, not so much for the public, as for friends who were, or whom he longed to have, in sympathy with him. His poems are confidential outpourings to himself from his inmost spirit, impartings from the eternal me to the daily me. Into this secret dual solo he loved to draw a third person, or persons, who would feel with the other two, with the man and with the poet. The creative mind is lonely, courts solitude: its work is as silent and inapproachable as is the renovating energy of Nature in crescent spring. Its depths are in the unseen, in the heavenly spontaneous; and the more genuine the inspiration, the less responsive is it to superficial solicitings. But when genius is conjoined to an affectionate and a social personality, its possessor will hasten, with the eagerness of a child, to show its new gifts, to

communicate its fresh figments. The going out of one's self into another, the throwing of one's life into other lives, is the highest privilege, the consummate virtue, of a man's being; and the poet's revelations of his inmost is a form of this self-giving.

We have seen what a source of genial joy and of intellectual stimulus to Goethe was the friendship of Schiller. From his boyish and youthful companionships at Frankfort and the Universities, to the intimate ties between him and his several secretaries in his latter years, the friendly bonds that were necessary to his well-being were most of them strengthened by these finer æsthetic threads. So with his long attachment to Meyer, a zealous, capable writer on Art, who was at different periods an inmate of Goethe's house for weeks and months at a time. At Rome we saw him quickly united with Artists. But neither with Schiller nor with any of the many others could these relations have been so close and enduring, had there not been in Goethe, beneath the genius and the active thinker, the hearty man who needed to love and to be loved.

Goethe says, that for the flowering of the best natural gifts, circumstances must be propitious. But the paramount function of the

gifted is to resist old circumstances and create new ones, to break through the surroundings and fences of timorous custom, and leap into new fields. Wanting this stout corps of born pioneers, — men who get their exceptional momentum from the powers behind their birth, — wanting these, humanity could not unfold itself, would be doomed to arid stationariness. Goethe, himself a leader in the pioneer corps, knew — no one better — its expansive virtue. By the favor of circumstances, he meant those opportunities and facilities for culture and recognition which are, especially to the Poet and Artist, important for the play and prosperous projection of their inborn superiorities. He himself would doubtless have been cramped, and would have failed to reach his proper altitude, in Iowa or Arkansas, or perhaps even in his native Frankfort. He felt that he had been favored by what, as regards an individual, seem the accidents of fortune ; favored in the time and place of his coming upon the stage of life ; especially favored in his parents, whose marked and contrasting qualities were so happily fused to compound the many-sidedness of their son ; and favored by meeting the young Duke of Weimar. But here comes in Goethe's own winning personality. Had he not been just

the Goethe that he was, the meeting would have been barren. On the other hand, few young sovereign Dukes would have had the respondent magnetism to feel at once the power of a young Goethe, and having urgently invited the brilliant Doctor of laws to visit him in Weimar, would have had, when he got him there, the clear solidity of judgment to weigh him so accurately. Before the expiration of a year the Duke raised his young friend to a high official post. And when the court and town cried out against this sudden unexampled elevation, the prophetic boy (he was not yet twenty) added with his own hand to the protocol of the acts of his ministers, the following intelligent and noble justification: "Enlightened persons congratulate me on possessing such a man. His genius and capacity are well known. To employ a man of such a stamp in any other functions than those in which he can render available the extraordinary gifts he possesses, is to abuse them. As to the observation that persons of merit think themselves passed over: I observe, in the first place, that nobody to my knowledge, in my service, has a right to count on an equal degree of favor; and I add that I will never consent to be governed by mere length of service or rotation, in

my choice of a person whose functions place him in such immediate relation to myself, and are so important to the happiness of my people. In such a case, I shall attend to nothing but the degree of confidence I can repose in the person of my choice. The public opinion, which perhaps censures the admission of Dr. Goethe to my Council without having passed the previous steps of Amtman, Professor, Kammerrath, or Regierungsrath, produces no effect on my judgment. The world forms its opinion on prejudices; but I watch and work, — as every man must who wishes to do his duty, — not to make a noise, not to attract the applause of the world, but to justify my conduct to God and my conscience."

Of all Goethe's friendships this with the Duke of Weimar was the longest and most prolific, and more prolific to the Duke himself than to Goethe. It lasted more than half a century, having begun in 1775 and ended with the death of the Duke, in 1828.

For a few months after Goethe's arrival in Weimar the two friends led a wild, corybantic life together, hunting, dancing, masquerading, skating, sleighing, flirting, fooling. But in the midst of this jovial exuberance business was not forgotten. Already, before his formal official in-

vestiture with the title and duties of Councilor, Goethe was playing towards his younger friend the part of a Mentor-Pylades. As a sample of the force of animal spirits, the two one day stood in the market-square of Jena smacking great cart-whips for a wager. Casting our look a half century forward, we see, in contrast with that feat, the same Duke, in August, 1827, entering the study of his friend, accompanied by the King of Bavaria, who comes to pay homage to the renowned poet, offering him the order of the Grand Cross. Goethe, turning to the Duke, replies, with doubtless as much of arch playfulness as of punctiliousness : " If my gracious sovereign consents." To which Carl August rejoins : " Come, old fellow, no nonsense."

The Dowager Duchess, the mother of Carl August, the sprightly, sociable, unceremonious Amalia, who chose Wieland to be tutor to her boys, and during their minority administered the Duchy dutifully and capably, she would not fail to be a friend and admirer of Goethe. How cordial their relations became is learnt from one of his notes to her. Herder, whom Goethe had induced the Duke to call to Weimar as court-chaplain, had to maintain a large family on slender means. The Duke took

upon him to provide for one of the children, and Goethe wrote to the Duchess Amalia, begging her to do the same for another. This Goethe did too at a time when Herder showed no friendliness towards him. Not receiving prompt answer to his appeal, Goethe wrote again, telling the Duchess that if she did not provide for the child, he should do it himself. On the death of Amalia, in 1807, Goethe said at her funeral: "It is the privilege of the nobler natures that their passing away to higher spheres works blessing, as did their abode on earth; for, like stars, they shine towards us as points of light, by which in our storm-tossed voyage we may steer our course."

Two or three years before coming to Weimar Goethe wrote a satirical farce, called *Gods, Heroes, and Wieland,* dashing it off at a single sitting, with a bottle of Burgundy by his side. So little malevolence was there in it, that on the third day after Goethe's arrival in Weimar, Wieland met him by invitation at a friend's house, and was so charmed with him that he wrote to Jacobi: "Dearest little brother, what have I to tell you! How wholly is the man after my heart! I fell in love with him at first sight as at dinner I sat beside the superb youth." On the day of Wieland's fu-

neral, thirty-eight years after this first meeting, Falk found Goethe much affected. He spoke of the continuance of existence after death as a thing of course. "And what do you think," asked Falk, "is at this moment the occupation of Wieland's soul?" "Nothing petty, nothing unworthy, nothing out of keeping with that moral greatness which he all his life sustained. It is something to have passed a life of eighty years in unblemished dignity and honor; it is something to have attained to that pitch of refined wit, of tender, elegant thought, which predominated so delightfully in Wieland's soul; it is something to have possessed that industry, that iron persistency and perseverance, in which he surpassed us all. The destruction of such high powers of soul is a thing that never, and under no circumstances, can even come into question. Nature is not such a spendthrift of her capital. Wieland's soul is one of Nature's treasures, a perfect jewel."

I come now to a friendship of Goethe, which, like that with Schiller, was formed in his mature years, and which fed a correspondence more voluminous than that, covering, as it does, many more years. "Of all rare gifts," says Goethe, "the rarest is the gift to be a friend." Among the many proofs he gave of

himself possessing this gift, none is stronger than his friendship for Zelter.

Zelter entered manhood in Berlin as a stone-mason, and then master-builder, but was so attracted to music, that he soon abandoned a vocation for which he had much fitness, for one for which he had still more. He became Director of a public singing school, through which he did good service in Berlin, stimulating many to the cultivation of music, and educating some excellent musicians. The celebrated Mendelssohn was his pupil. By his capacity and character he won the good-will and friendship of distinguished men and high officials.

With Goethe Zelter's acquaintance began through music, Zelter having composed airs to some of the poet's songs. He speaks of his "agreeable fright" on hearing that Goethe liked them. The first letters were exchanged in 1799. In 1801 Zelter sent Goethe a biographical notice he had just printed of a friend and musician. Goethe, in the letter acknowledging it, writes a sentence weighty, like so many others of his, with a fresh wisdom. The sympathetic, vivid portrait drawn by Zelter he contrasts with the performance of those necrologists who, immediately on the death of a man

of note, "go busily to work to balance the good against the evil in his life, and with hypocritical justice set forth his so called virtues and faults, thereby destroying a personality far more effectually than death can do it; for, a personality can only be conceived in the lively conjunction of such opposite qualities."

In 1802 Zelter, by a visit to Weimar, tightened, through face to face intercourse, the ties that already bound him to Goethe. Thenceforth their letters are more frequent and more intimate. The subjoined extract, from a letter of Goethe to Zelter, April 1st, 1802, I should not make were it only a proof of the increased intimacy between them; but it illustrates a trait in Goethe, and one which is essential to a fuller likeness of him. Friendly services of this kind were habitual to Goethe: through good-will and principle he amply obeyed his own precept, and did "the duty nearest him," whether it were small or large.

"One of our most thorough business-men, of the subordinate class, has destined his son to be a carpenter. The young man has served an apprenticeship of three years, and has worked three quarters of a year as journeyman. They wish now to send him abroad, and they think that in Berlin he would have an opportunity of learning much.

"Would you have the goodness to give me, out of your knowledge, some good advice. Of course the young man, while learning his trade, would like to earn something, and an addition can be furnished him from home. But it were desirable that in a large, seductive city there were some one to have an eye on him."

A quarter of a century from the opening of the correspondence and friendship between Goethe and Zelter, Chancellor von Mueller of Weimar, in his valuable report of conversations with Goethe, makes the following entry: "This morning the admirable, honest Zelter gave me by his visit a couple of most delightful hours. How clear, vigorous, incisive is everything he says. 'People often wonder,' said he, 'how it is that I am on so good a footing with Goethe, who is so much higher and deeper than I. I am rough, even rude, go straight ahead, am willful, impetuous; but I have a soul and an open eye. I have been obliged to hew my own way: what I am, I am through slow, close, hard work, from the time I was a journeyman-mason. But I know Goethe thoroughly, and have often rightly divined the obscure passages in his poems, sometimes through my setting them to music. Goethe is like a child, he gives whatever he has. The philister-savants

cry out that he dabbles in everything. Now, if you already knew what he has done in science, or something better, why, you asses, did you not give it to us.'"

That was it: Zelter had more soul than most men, and thence saw many things more clearly. Having been drawn into contact with him through the skill wherewith he set songs to music, Goethe found in Zelter's honesty and heartiness what attached his affections, and in Zelter's intelligence and earnest activity what enlarged his own intellectual sphere, and put him in fructifying relations with more men and fresh circumstances. In the latter part of his high career a correspondent like Zelter was just what Goethe needed. From continuous confidential communications with such a man he drew comfort and strength. To have a strong-headed and, at the same time, genial friend to whom, from his ever-replenished fullness, he could familiarly pour out thoughts, opinions, judgments, feelings, was a boon to one who so enjoyed utterance as Goethe did. Posterity has to thank Zelter for inner views of Goethe which but for this sympathetic friend we should never have had. Here is a biographical stroke which could be made by no pen but the autobiographical. In 1807 Goethe

writes: "Your reiterated invitation makes my heart heavy. That I have not yet become acquainted with your institution [the Singing-Academy at Berlin] is unpardonable; but, for some years past I have a clinging to home, which comes chiefly from this, that there is in me so much that is stirred up and yet not worked up. Thus I am busy the whole year, in order to get only here and there a clear insight; without counting care of health and current circumstances. Yet these would not be enough to restrain me. But at bottom the cause is, that I am afraid of new influences and excitements, and thence purposely forego many an enjoyment."

Ever a conscientious, earnest student of Art, Goethe evidently believed with Aristotle that the most weighty and philosophical human product is poetry. Hence he was through life frequently offended by the shallow pretensions, the false aims, of writers who, because they have some poetic sensibility and some gift of expression, believe that sentimental effusion in verse and unshaped utterance and rhetorical coloring are poetry. From his constructive thoughtfulness and varied sagacious practice, Goethe knew that a poem, to be a poem, must be organic; that is, in order to put and keep life in

it, it must have, not a body merely, but a self-proportioned body; must, in one word, have a soul; for, having a soul, the soul will build for itself a suitable body.

He had recommended to Zelter a young musician of Weimar. In 1808 he thus writes: "Take my best thanks, dear friend, for that which you are willing and able to do for young Eberwein. The world of Art lies, indeed, all too much in the difficult and severe, that a young man should so easily become aware what there is to do. They ever seek it elsewhere than there where it is to be found, and even when they do get sight of the source, they cannot find the road to it.

"Thence I am brought to despair by a half dozen young poets who, with much more than common natural gifts, will not bring much to pass that I can take satisfaction in. Werner, Oehlenschlæger, Arnim, Brentano and others keep constantly at work; but what they produce runs into the formless and characterless. No one will understand, that the highest and only operation of Nature and of Art is, *to give shape*, and in the shaping *specification*, in order that each production be and remain individual and significant."

To scientific contemporaries Goethe owed a

grudge for the indifference and even contempt wherewith the most of them treated his *Theory of Colors*, to the study of which in the latter half of his life, he gave much time, the exposition of which fills several volumes of his works, and with which he made pretension to have overthrown the Newtonian theory. This pretension, scientifically and elaborately set forth, deserved a scientific examination, a thorough experimental refutation or confirmation. Such examination it seems never to have even yet received.

Inventions are far more rapidly successful than discoveries: they are nearer to the common mind. The inventions consequent on the discovery of the force of steam have spread all over Christendom, and beyond it, while the discovery of the physiology of the brain, momentous beyond expression, and made about the same time, not being diffusible through inventions, continues yet unacknowledged by the very classes who are, or ought to be, most concerned for its cultivation; and so, metaphysicians and psychologists and moralists keep swinging round in the twilight circle of consciousness, into which if they would but let the light of Gall's splendid insight, their half-truths would be illuminated into whole truths, and

deep problems be solved which, without such light, must remain insoluble. This discovery is just the *objective* that is wanted for the metaphysical *subjective*.

When, in 1805, Gall came to Halle to expound his new discovery, Goethe happened to be there on a visit to his friend, Professor Wolf; and he gladly seized the opportunity to be so "profoundly instructed." He not only attended Gall's lectures, but sought long interviews with him. The result was, that he accepted the discovery, and he devotes several pages of the *Diary* to its fundamental positions. As Director of the theatre in Weimar he rejected a farce, sent him by a friend, called the "Skull-scholar," because he would not "on general grounds give countenance to anything which tended to bring ridicule or contempt upon the praiseworthy investigations of a man like Gall."

The mathematicians, Goethe thought, were especially obtuse against his doctrine of colors. In a long letter to Zelter, in 1811, he touches off at them a triple-shotted field-piece: "For the rest, on this occasion, what I have long known becomes plainer to me than ever, namely, that the culture which the mind gets from Mathematics is extremely one-sided and

limited. Nay, Voltaire makes bold to say somewhere, — *J'ai toujours remarqué que la Géométrie laisse l'esprit où elle le trouve.* And Franklin distinctly expresses his especial aversion to mathematicians in social converse, finding unbearable their pettiness and spirit of contradiction."

Sending Zelter, in 1812, the second part of the autobiography, "of my life," he writes, "freshened up or warmed up, whichever people may choose to call it," he concludes with the following confidential declaration : "How much in this little book is directly addressed to you ! Had I not my absent friends present to my mind, where should I get the mood to write such things ? "

The friendly relations between Goethe and Zelter, founded on sympathy and mutual esteem, which had subsisted for a dozen years, were still further strengthened through an incident which occurred in 1812. A step-son of Zelter committed suicide. It was a heavy blow to Zelter, who loved the young man as though he were his own. The day after the act he wrote to Goethe a simple, touching account of it, finishing with these words : "No, it is hard, cruel ! If he knew how I loved him, he could not be happy where he now is ! Say to me a

healing word!" How was this tender appeal answered? Goethe was not a man of phrases. In the *Diary* he says: "Through all my life I have guarded myself against nothing so firmly as against empty words; and a phrase in which there is nothing individually thought or felt is to me, in others unbearable, in myself impossible." To Zelter he wrote a long letter, one of his longest, of which I translate the opening paragraphs, less than one third of the whole. A letter of condolence of Goethe, then in his sixty-third year, to one who, with literal truth, may be called an intimate friend, will be worth keeping. What warmth there is under its calmness, and withal how judicious. Thou, in German, whether written or spoken, is a mark of affection: it comes warm from the nursery, is used by parents towards children, between brothers and sisters. Goethe used it to some of the companions and correspondents of his younger days. It is not exchanged between him and Schiller, genuine and cordial as were their personal relations. But now, out of the fullness of his sympathy, he seals a bond of friendship of some years' standing with this endearing form of address towards one whom he had first known after himself was past fifty. The sturdy Zelter counted upon this letter;

when it came into his hands he felt that now he should have soothing words, such as no other could give him. But what must have been the joy of his tender, manly heart when he read the first word, expressive of so much, itself a consolation. The letter is dated November 3d, 1812.

"Thy letter, my dear friend, which announces to me the great affliction that has come upon thy house, found me engaged in very earnest reflections upon life: it has much dejected, nay, bowed me down, and only on thee have I been able to brace myself up again. On the black touchstone of death thou hast spread thyself like refined gold. How grand is a character when it is so penetrated with soul, and how admirable must a talent be which rests on such a ground!

"About the deed or misdeed itself I know not what to say. When the *tædium vitæ* seizes a man, he is only to be pitied, not to be reproached. That all the symptoms of this extraordinary disease, at the same time natural and unnatural, once raged through my inmost being, any one can learn from *Werther*. I know well enough what resolutions and struggles it then cost me to escape from the billows of death, as likewise from how many a ship-

wreck I have since with difficulty saved myself and painfully recovered. Just the same are all the stories of seafarers and fishermen. After the night-storm the shore is regained, and the half-drowned dries himself, and the next morning when the glorious sun again steps forth on the glittering waves, 'the sea has its old appetite for the faint-hearted.'

"When one sees how the world generally, and particularly the younger portion of it, is not only given up to its lusts and passions, but how at the same time, by the earnest follies of the times, the higher and better in them is obstructed and wasted, so that what should lead to blessedness becomes damnation, without taking into account unspeakable outward pressure, — when we see this we no longer wonder at misdeeds whereby man outrages himself and others. I could write a new *Werther* which should make people's hair stand on end even more stiffly than the first did. Let me add one more remark. Most young people who feel they have something good in them, make too great demands upon themselves. To this they are however impelled and obliged by their gigantic surroundings. I know a half dozen such who are sure to come to naught, and whom it were not possible to help, even if one

could make them understand their true interest. Few people reflect that reason and a brave will are given us in order that we hold ourselves back not only from what is evil, but also from excess of what is good."

The rest of the letter Goethe devotes to topics such as were ordinarily exchanged between them. From Zelter's answer I copy a few lines: "I have gained while I lost, and believed that I should hardly recover from the loss; and so life stirs within me again with manly animation, and I will willingly acknowledge I have felt joy once more." A letter written a month later, acknowledging one just received from Goethe, Zelter thus opens: "My sweet friend and master! my beloved, my brother! What shall I call him whose name is ever on my tongue, whose image is reflected in all that I love and honor! When the Weimar envelope comes up my steps, the whole house is illuminated. The children scramble for which of them shall bring it to me, in order to see the father's face at its brightest, and I then hold it long unopened, looking at it to see if it is what it is."

The extracts last made are from the beginning of the second volume of the letters between Goethe and Zelter. The whole correspondence

fills six volumes; and from them might be culled many pages of paragraphs and sentences deserving to be memorable for their wisdom, or loaded with personal significance, or beaming with criticism or sentiment. The limits imposed by the scope of this volume oblige me to be content with a few of the most notable passages, which, giving a rare light to the volumes, put the reader in closer, clearer contact with the mind whence the light issues.

"Art, where it manifests itself through the highest Artist, creates a form so powerfully vivid, that it ennobles and transforms any material."

"State-Councilor Hufeland has sent me, in the name of Prince Radzivil, a very friendly invitation to Berlin this winter. Such expeditions are becoming more and more impossible to me. I should be a burden to myself and to others. My well-being demands the greatest evenness in living and enjoying." May, 1816.

"I have learnt immensely from Linneus, but not botany. Except Shakespeare and Spinoza, I know of none of the departed who has had such influence upon me."

"Nothing is more natural than Nature, which lies ever there where we don't look: we seek the horse on which we are riding."

"Here is also a letter from my mother, which you wished to see. In it, as in every line she wrote, shines forth the character of a woman who, in old-testamental fear of God, lived a robust, hearty life, full of trust in the people's and family's God, and who, when she came to die, gave such minute orders for her own funeral, that the kind of wine and the size of the hard-cake wherewith the attendants were to be refreshed, were exactly prescribed."

"I have never concealed what a deadly enemy I am to all parody and travesty, but only on this account am I so, because this base brood pulls down the noble, the beautiful, the great, in order to annihilate them."

"I am editing my correspondence with Schiller, from 1794 to 1805. It will be a great gift to be offered to the Germans, nay, I may say, to man. Two friends of that kind, who mutually upraise each other while they are ever unbosoming themselves one to the other. It affects me strangely, for I learn what I once was.

"But what is most instructive is its showing the condition of two men who pursue their aims as it were by compulsion, and, through inward overactivity, through outward excitation and interruption, split up their time; so that,

after all, nothing is brought to pass fully worthy of their powers, talents, and purposes. It will be highly edifying ; for every stout fellow will find consolation in it."

The letter from which the above extract is made was written in 1824. The last paragraph expresses a mood, not a fact. At an earlier date, and at the earliest, that is, during the life of Schiller, Goethe, we have seen, estimated differently, and, I think, far more justly, the reciprocal effect of their relations to one another. Now, in his seventy-sixth year, reposing in the sunshine of his elevation, the struggles of a quarter of a century before looked dark with the smoke and dust of conflict, as he read of those struggles in this correspondence ; but those very conflicts were fuel to the light in which he now basked. In Goethe's rivalry with Schiller there was nothing unwholesome. It was not poisoned by envy, it was not distorted by personal resentment ; and so, it did not lead to false aims or overstraining. The cordiality of their intercourse kept it an invigorating tonic. It helped to unfold Goethe's powers, it did not force or misdirect them ; and without it the height from which he now looked serenely round on the wide domains of his renown would have lacked somewhat of its eminence.

Is not the subjoined passage a verbatim report of what, only the other evening, we all heard, less choicely expressed, from the plaintive tongue of an "ultra" conservative old gentleman? Nevertheless, it is found in a letter of Goethe to Zelter. Pity that the electric telegraph had not been in time for Goethe. The beauty and scientific grandeur of the discovery might have reconciled him to its prosaic uses, and possibly have opened his eyes more hopefully towards the future; for here the triumphant marriage of the aspiring thought of man with deep, susceptible nature is even more momentous as prophecy than as fulfillment. The letter is dated June 6th, 1825.

"But, my dear friend, everything is now *ultra;* in thinking and in acting every one rushes on headlong. No man knows himself any more, no one understands the element in which he moves and works. Of true simplicity there is no longer any question; of silly stuff, called simple, there is plenty.

"Young people are set agoing much too early, and are then swept into the whirlpool of the times. Riches and swiftness are what the world most admires, and for which every one strives. Railroads, fast coaches, steamboats, and all possible facilities of communication,

these are what engross the more cultivated classes, in order to over-cultivate themselves and thereby to get no further than mediocrity. And one of the results of generality is, that a medium culture is common ; thither tend Bible-societies and Lancastrian school-methods, and I know not how much else.

"This century is for the clever heads, for quick-witted, practical men, who, endowed with a certain activity, feel their superiority over the crowd, although they are not gifted for the highest."

Here is a critical precept well worth reiterating: "Whoever would gain the right road must have faith in simplicity, in the simple, in the primitively productive. To do this is however not given to every one ; we are born into an artificial condition, and it is much easier to make this more artificial than to turn back to the simple."

Of rarely gifted writers, of those with highest and fullest endowment, it is a characteristic, that in their best outgivings they are at once general and specific. Thus, the chief personages of Goethe's dramas and narrative fictions combine mostly breadth with individuality: they are neither grandly vague nor pettily limited. While distinctly individual, they are

symbolical, and hence they are poetical. And this virtue belongs to most of Goethe's writings. His mind being very true and very full, a short poem, a paragraph, a sentence, will often be laden with a meaning and applications far beyond its mere occasion. In a letter of 1830 he complains to Zelter that "Good, well-meaning, sensible people wish to take my poems to pieces, regarding it to be indispensable that they get hold of the most special facts out of which they grew; instead of which they should be content that a poem has so raised the special up to the general that they can easily take it into their own individuality."

Only eleven days before his death Goethe wrote to Zelter his last letter, dated March 11th, 1832. Zelter's last to Goethe was dated March 22d, the day of Goethe's death. Chancellor Mueller announced to Zelter the death of his great friend. On the 31st Zelter concludes a letter of acknowledgment to the Chancellor with these words: "Pardon me, noble friend! I ought not to complain, but my old eyes will not obey. I once saw him, too, weep: that must be my justification." Two years earlier, Zelter, referring to some legal arrangements between them, by which Zelter wished to provide that his share of the proceeds from

the publication hereafter of their correspondence should go to his two unmarried daughters, ends the paragraph as follows: "I write this with some emotion, as I cannot conceal from myself, that one of us two will find himself here alone, while I would wish to be where thou art and to go where thou goest." And his wish was fulfilled. As though the earth had lost for him its daily charm when Goethe had gone from it, he followed him in a few weeks.

Many of Goethe's friends survived him, and among them deserve especially to be mentioned three in Weimar, Riemer and Eckerman, his two secretaries, and Chancellor Mueller. All three have left records of their intercourse with Goethe which are of rare value as biographical data, all three being intelligent, cultivated men of high character. That the reminiscences or minutes of such men, with their intimate opportunities through a long series of years, should glow, in rivalry of one another, with devotion and admiration, is but corroborative testimony as to the solid worth as well as personal attractiveness there was in the one object of their unique homage.

## V.

### LOVES.

As to his feelings man is an exquisite instrument, thrilled by a breath or a touch from without or from within. The poet is poet only because he is more finely strung than other men, and thence more capable of the heart's music. Especially is he more liable to mysterious, unbidden motions from the interior self. More imaginative, because fuller of illuminated sensibility, which adds a so "precious seeing to the eye," the poet both gives more to, and takes more from, the object of his feeling; and thence in him joys and griefs work livelier than in men less genially endowed. The attractions that to life give beauty and very being, draw him more magnetically.

The primal, paramount attraction, the love of man for woman, of woman for man, the parental source of all other attractions, the central fire, in whose creative glow dance in embryo all the passions and powers of humanity, to this great attraction, irresistible, next to omnipotent, the

poet should be peculiarly susceptible, he who, through a keener consciousness of life, a clearer light of soul, is the privileged interpreter of the heart and its world of loves. And that he is thus susceptible the lives and writings of most of the greater poets prove. Be the biographical traditions about Shakespeare true or not, from his works we know how strong in him was the sexual feeling, — that feeling so pure and precious in its healthy play, so foul and baleful in its perversion. In Goethe it was equally strong.

Goethe's first love does not fall at so early a period as Dante's. He was nearly fifteen when he met with Gretchen. His poetical gift it was that brought him in contact with Gretchen. Already he wrote verses, and the circulation of these by a young friend led to companionship with some youths below him in the social scale of Frankfort. At one of these gatherings in a kind of restaurant, the wine having given out, call was made for the serving-maid. Instead of by her the call was answered by a girl with a most graceful figure, delicate neck, exquisite mouth, whose beauty and bearing so fascinated the boy-bard that her image haunted him from that hour. Goethe draws a living picture of this humble, lovely girl, who gave him good ad-

vice as to the company he was then keeping, who bore herself always with modesty and self-respect, who would not allow him or any of them to touch her or even shake hands with her, but who, while he would be reading aloud one of his pieces, would gently put her arm on his shoulder and look over his paper, the woman evidently pleased with the handsome gifted boy, and, woman-like, honestly enjoying her fascination over him. Goethe carried with him through life the sweet memory of Gretchen. Besides the immortality she shares with others in the Autobiography, her name is burned into the most pathetic pages of *Faust*.

In the midst of his account of this affair, Goethe thus opens a paragraph: "The first love-motions of an uncorrupted youth take an entirely spiritual direction. Nature seems to wish that one sex shall become through the other sensuously aware of the good and the beautiful. And so to me, through the beholding of this girl, and my love for her, was opened a new world of the beautiful and the excellent."

Gretchen was suddenly snatched from his sight forever. Several of the jovial circle were suspected of petty crimes and were arrested. Gretchen was fully acquitted, but left Frankfort. Goethe had the mortification of being

examined as a comrade of the criminals, and, what to a love-sick youth was a far deeper mortification, he had to hear that Gretchen, when questioned as to her relations with him, had stated that she looked upon him as a boy, and felt towards him only as a sister. Nevertheless, his young heart had to suffer for a time those sweet love-pangs wherewith it was his lot to be often visited all through youth and manhood, and even into his old age.

At this early season, love, the love for woman, was an unusually active element of Goethe's being; perhaps, in one so richly organized, a requisite stimulant to his mental growth. He had not been long at Leipzig ere the place in his heart first held by Gretchen was filled by Kaetchen Schoenkopf, the daughter of respectable parents in whose house he was domesticated as a boarder. Is there a melody in these two conjoined words, or does her name catch a music from its immortality, as being that of one who loved and was beloved by the student Goethe, whose name therefore is to be handed down through the ages, each successive generation freshening the sound with its interest and sympathy?

It looks as though Nature designed that at that blossoming period Goethe should learn

more from the love and companionship of women than from those whom his father sent him to Leipzig to learn from, the Professors in the Faculty of Law. The current however of his love for Kaetchen did not always run smooth, of which probably Goethe was more the cause than she. Soon after his return to Frankfort he had to learn of her engagement to one whom he had introduced to her. This was a trial. There never had been a prospect of marriage between them: she was three years older than Goethe, and he was still a boy: but love, — unless it reach the highest spiritual phase, — is ever an appropriator, and in such a case looks upon itself as robbed. Hence the extremities and crimes of jealousy. But towards his Kaetchen Goethe was wise and generous. In his last letter to her he said: "That I live peacefully is all that I can say to you of myself, and vigorously, and healthily, and industriously, for I have no woman in my head. Horn and I are still good friends; but, so it happens in the world, he has his thoughts and ways, and I have my thoughts and ways, and so a week passes and we scarcely see each other once. But, everything considered, I am at last tired of Frankfort, and at the end of March I shall leave it. I must not yet go to you, I

perceive; for if I came at Easter you could not be married. And Kaetchen Schoenkopf I will not see again, if I am not to see her otherwise than so. At the end of March, therefore, I go to Strasbourg; if you care to know that, as I believe you do."

When the body and mind are in the quick ferment of growth, between the ages of fifteen and twenty, there is not yet depth of soil or steadiness of motion enough for the great passion to take strong and fast hold: its wounds are healed and covered by rapidity of expansion. If Frederica was not the first love of Goethe she was the first love of the man, Goethe. He was turned of twenty when he went to Strasbourg. Had Goethe first met Frederika in the city of Strasbourg, the world would probably have lacked the most beautiful love-idyl ever penned, and which draws its beauty and effectiveness from its reality, the poet relating, as only poet can relate, a true story —his own story. The secluded country parsonage at Sesenheim, the hearty smiles of hospitality, the sudden illumination of a rural household by infrequent visitors, the very isolation of the simple-minded family and its limitation to the pastor and his two daughters, all this made a propitious environment and accompaniment,

and gave a bloom to Frederika's cheek and a sparkle to her innocent eye, which helped not a little to captivate a young poet. It is a touching testimony to the vividness of the memory Goethe retained of Frederika, that, when dictating to his secretary, more than forty years after the event, his account of it, he was unusually affected, stopped often in his walk up and down the room, paused in the dictation, and then after a silence, ending in a deep sigh, continued the narrative in a lower tone.

Why did Goethe not marry Frederika? This question may be quickly and reproachfully answered by the hasty, or the thoughtless, or the ill-disposed. The well-disposed will recall the golden precept, *Judge not*, or as Goethe says, with a totally different reference, in one of his letters to Frau von Stein: "Judge not until you have stood in his place." And it is not easy to put one's self in the place of Goethe. Not half of the love-affairs among the youth of Christendom end in marriage. Human destinies are not spun off so smoothly. Externally all things may seem to fit, melted to closer fitness by mutual affection, as in this case; and yet, behind the apparent circumstances which all urge marriage, there may lie effectual, unapparent influences which forbid it, especially in

deep prolific natures like Goethe's. Enough that we have the fact that Goethe did not marry Frederika. I shall not be the one to have the absurd audacity to thrust my posthumous wish against the recorded judgment of Providence. I will not be guilty, even in thought, of the impertinence to crumple up, — like an indignant hand an offensive note, — the most variably fruitful life that Literature possesses, by desiring to give another direction to its stream so near its source.

As to blaming Goethe, how easy that is we all know from the daily practice almost everybody has of blaming friends and neighbors, and of ordering other people's affairs to our own entire satisfaction. In this case we may save ourselves from the commonness and offense of censure by listening to words of condemnation from the only one who has a full right to use them. Goethe thus berates himself: "Frederika's answer to the letter in which I had bidden her adieu, tore my heart. I now, for the first time, became aware of her bereavement, and saw no possibility of alleviating it. She was ever in my thoughts; I felt that she was wanting to me; and, worst of all, I could not forgive myself! Gretchen had been taken from me; Annchen had left me; but now, for

the first time, I was guilty ; I had wounded, to its very depths, one of the most beautiful and tender of hearts. And that period of gloomy repentance, bereft of the love which so invigorated me, was agonizing, insupportable. But man will live, and hence I took a sincere interest in others, seeking to disentangle their embarrassments, and to unite those about to part, that they might not feel what I felt. Hence I got the name of the 'Confidant,' and also, on account of my wanderings, I was named the 'Wanderer.' Under the broad, open sky, on the heights and in the valleys, in the fields and through the woods, my mind regained some of its calmness. I almost lived on the road, wandering between the mountains and the plains. Often I went, alone or in company, right through my native city, as though I were a stranger in it, dining at one of the great inns in the High Street, and after dinner pursuing my way. I turned more than ever to the open world and to Nature ; there alone I found comfort. During my walks I sang to myself strange hymns and dithyrambs. One of these, the *Wanderer's Sturmlied*, still remains. I remember singing it aloud in an impassioned style amid a terrific storm. The burden of this rhapsody is, that a man of genius must walk

resolutely through the storms of life, relying solely on himself."

Here is a translation, not of the *Wanderer's Stormsong*, which is rather long for insertion here, but of that other brief, grand *Wanderer's Nightsong*, which was written at this or some similar period of tumultuous unrest: —

Thou who dost in heaven bide,
Every pain and sorrow stillest,
Him whom twofold woes betide
With a twofold solace fillest,
O, this tossing, let it cease!
What means all this pain, unrest?
Soothing peace!
Come, O, come into my breast!

How many a Frederika, before and since, has bloomed and loved in rural retirement (or in urban privacy), her love serving only to unfold the girl into the woman, its warm prophecies doomed to exhale in sighs, she living unwedded, her story unbruited and unknown, while the pangs of the pastor of Sesenheim's daughter have ever the sympathy of the most cultivated hearts in Christendom, a sympathy so close that many have to brace them with the divine precept, *Judge not*, to keep off hard thoughts about him to whose genius we solely owe our tender, purifying participation in her tears. What a shrewd thrust that is of Lewes

at the close of his Sesenheim chapter: "And so farewell Frederika, bright and exquisite vision of a poet's youth! We love you, pity you, and think how differently *we* should have treated you!"

The fact, affirmed to be indubitable, that not many months after the departure of Goethe, Frederika exchanged vows with Lenz, a friend of Goethe, will be learnt with pleasure or with pain, according to the age, temperament, and, in most cases, sex of the reader. In him the wound seems to have been deeper than in her. But they had the satisfaction of meeting eight years later with most kindly feelings on both sides, there being no troublesome traces left in either of their youthful love.

Goethe's father, now that his son was *Doctor Juris*, being determined to make a thorough lawyer of him, sent him to Wetzlar, that he might gain some insight into the practice at what was then the great Chancery of all Germany, where twenty thousand cases still waited decision, some of which had been in court a century and a half. As at Strasbourg Goethe had busied himself not much with law, but with Gothic Architecture, Bayle, Giordano Bruno, waltzing, fencing, Faust, Herder, Goetz, Shakespeare and Frederika, so at Wetzlar he followed

too the instinct of his expanding faculties, helped his friend Gotter to translate Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, published short poems in Boie's *Annual*, and fell in love with Charlotte Buff. Charlotte was already engaged to another. At the same time there resided in Wetzlar, secretary to one of the legations, a young man named Jerusalem, of melancholy moods and a theoretical defender of suicide. Jerusalem was in love with the wife of one of his friends; and this unhappy passion, aggravating a natural morbidness, led him to shoot himself. Out of his own and Jerusalem's still more unfortunate passion, together with the generally unhealthy, rebellious feeling of the times, Goethe created *Werther,— Werther*, a titanic shriek in the desert of the eighteenth century, — so full of Goethe, Goethe the untamed, so full of pictures, of pathos, of poetry, and so full of heart and of wise insights.

He tore himself away from Wetzlar and Charlotte. A characteristic of Goethe was a demand for sensuous presence in the object of his interest. He required personally to feel, or to have felt, a passion or emotion in order to represent it poetically. And the range of his representations is so wide because the gamut of his sensibilities was so full and fine. Cer-

tain passions and conjunctions had not been deeply experienced because they had been resisted. Near enough he had calmly stood to be singed by the flame and smoke of volcanoes, whose craters he would not explore to the bottom ; he had gazed into abysses whose depths he withheld himself from sounding. To the poet this was enough : it gave him a clear right of usufruct. He could not rest until he had seen Italy, and had stood face to face with its bays and mountains, its sun and moon, and its marvels of Art. His imagination asked for solid stuff, palpitating reality, out of which to shape its creations: it could not snatch men and women from the air. Both the perceptions and the affections of Goethe were keen and strong : and while they fed his larger faculties of thought and emotion, they upheld and strengthened each the other. He loved a person the more for seeing him or her : presence bred love, and love throve on presence. This, to be sure, is according to a law of human organization : out of sight, out of mind ; but in Goethe the law found exceptional exemplification. And being, from the wealth of his sympathies and vivacity of temperament, very impressible, new objects made themselves readily welcome. By no means were the old lost or

effaced, but for the moment their place was supplied. Add to this his joyousness, his activity of intellect, his practical sense, his self-control, and we can understand how he could, in most cases, inwardly master what he felt ought to be mastered. Thus, when on quitting Wetzlar and walking down the Lahn, he paid a visit in Coblenz to Frau von Laroche, — Wieland's earliest love, — the black eyes and other charms of her daughter, Maximiliane (the future mother of Bettina Brentano) consoled him wonderfully for the loss of Charlotte.

On his return to Frankfort he threw himself upon Literature and Art and upon Law, the last to the delight of his father, who, in amazement at the multiplicity of his son's occupations and devotions, spoke of him as "this singular creature;" but to the completeness of Goethe's daily being a "maiden" was essential. In one of the earlier letters of *Werther* he exclaims: "To the heart what is the world without love? What a magic lantern is without its light." Love lifted him, not above the earth: by no means; but high enough to float him over the prosaisms and platitudes of week-day life. He writes to his friend Kestner, the betrothed of Charlotte: "Tell Lotte (Charlotte) there is a certain maiden here whom I

love heartily, and whom I would choose above all others if I had any thought of marriage." This refers to Anna Antoinette Gerock, then only fifteen. Again he writes to Kestner: "Yesterday I skated from sunrise to sunset. And I have other sources of joy which I can't relate. Be comforted that I am almost as happy as people who love, like you two, that I am as full of hope, and that I have lately *felt* some poems. My sister greets you, my maiden also greets you, my gods greet you."

Goethe was attracted to the buds of womanhood. Was it that "sweet sixteen" is more fragrant with the poetry of feminine beauty? By successive attachments to fresh, unformed girls he became charged with this poetry. From his twentieth to his twenty-fifth year Goethe's heart was busied and charmed and warmed by the constant presence in it of one or other lovely, innocent young creature: Frederika, Charlotte, Maximiliane, Antoinette, Lili. It is a striking, significant phenomenon. It denotes healthiness of feeling, if nothing more. The images of these tender girls sweetened the imagination of the expanding poet. Constancy is not always a virtue; and if it were, it were one with which some excellent people are not born. If the capacity to harbor so many loves

in succession in one heart, proves rather that heart's inconstancy than its largeness, it is at least a presumption of its purity.

She who in the autobiography is called Lili, was a pretty, graceful blonde, the daughter of a rich Frankfort banker. Goethe, being already a man of note (he had just published *Werther*, and *Goetz von Berlichingen* shortly before), was a seductive mark for the sparkling looks of a fashionable debutante. Lili's attempt to flirt with Goethe resulted in her becoming so interested in him, that later, when the families on both sides pertinaciously opposed the match, she is said to have offered to go with him to America. In such an attempt there was more than the usual danger; for the great, lustrous eyes of Goethe shone from a countenance of rare manly beauty, and from his fluent tongue flowed what to the other sex is peculiarly fascinating, the speech of a glowing, imaginative mind, and this, backed by bounding animal spirits, an imposing presence, and the magnetism of genius: a combination formidable in itself, and which became irresistible when fortified by the attraction women feel towards one whose delight in woman and in beauty flushed his whole bearing and drew out of him his best.

How fortunate for posterity that from his boyhood to his latest years Goethe was so copious a correspondent. Here, in a letter to Augusta von Stolberg, is a picture of himself at the height of his Lili-fever: "If you can imagine a Goethe in braided coat, from head to foot in the gallantest costume, amid the glare of chandeliers, fastened to the card-table by a pair of bright eyes, surrounded by all sorts of people, driven to endless dissipation from concert to ball, and with frivolous interest making love to a pretty blonde, then will you have a picture of the present Carnival-Goethe."

Goethe once related how, over a friend of his, on the way to church, seated by his betrothed, there suddenly came such a dread, that he ordered the carriage to turn back. The ceremony and contract that awaited him in the church loomed upon him so formidably that he recoiled from facing them. When in his seventy-seventh year Goethe wrote this to Zelter, was he casting his thought back more than half a century, and embodying in a pointed story his own feelings? Between him and Lili it went so far that they became engaged. Still, the opposition of their families was scarcely relaxed; and the opposition triumphed, having, doubtless, a powerful secret ally in what seemed

an instinct of Goethe against the captivating bond. The giving Lili up was a long pang. He tells how, after the rupture, he would wander at night beneath her window. Once she was singing at the piano, and he recognized the words of a song he had written to her.

But Goethe was not "a marrying man," and in this case it was probably well that he was not; for, unless Lili had been an uncommonly clear-headed and sound-hearted girl, — which does not appear, — she would not have escaped the perverting influences of unleavened, unenlightened opulence. When people live much more on money than on mind, — as rich bankers, poor fellows, are obliged mostly to do, — their natures are liable to get belittled and distorted by artificialities and frivolities and ostentations. Through the daily pressure of superfluous wealth, especially sudden wealth, the whole being is apt to get contracted and materialized and denaturalized. In our present social organization, to be reared, encircled from childhood by all the facilities and temptations of riches, is a doom for which people should be commiserated, instead of being, as it is mostly regarded to be, a good fortune to be envied. For Goethe the circle of a rich Frankfort banker would not have been helpful.

Five years later, when he made a tour with the Duke of Weimar and visited Frederika, Goethe also saw Lili. She lived in Strasbourg, was happily married, and, her mother by her side, she received Goethe with a baby of seven weeks old in her arms, — the most comfortable way in which a young mother can receive a past admirer. Lili, no doubt, made him kiss the baby.

In a letter to Jacobi, written from Weimar in his thirty-third year, Goethe, referring to the past ten years of his life, says: "Here I am, dedicated to my old fate, suffering where others enjoy and enjoying where others suffer. What I have gone through cannot be told. When you see on the furnace hearth a glowing mass of iron, you don't think of the dross that lies hidden in it, and which only shows itself when the mass comes under the big hammer. It seems as if a powerful hammer had been necessary to free my nature from much dross and make my heart pure. And how much, how much that is perverse sticks in it yet."

The glowing mass had to bear yet many a hammering. The richer and more various the mental powers are, — that is, the powers both of head and heart, — the more tempering they need by collisions. Of these Goethe had more

than the common share, being a man of more than common sensibility, throbbing with passion and sympathy and aspiration, — a man of action as well as a student and poet, practical and outwardly enterprising as well as thoughtful and meditative and poetically inventive.

While he was still suffering from the loss of Lili came the invitation to Weimar, where, as we have seen, he was in the first years to serve a high laborious apprenticeship, such as poet never served before; and where lived a lady. who desired to know him and whom he longed to know.

In one of his excursions on the Rhine in 1774, Goethe fell in with Dr. Zimmerman (the "Zimmerman on Solitude") who showed him a portrait, set by the Doctor in such encomiums of the original that, what with the effect of the painter's lines and color and the Doctor's rhapsody, Goethe is said to have been sleepless for three nights. Your poetically imaginative man is sometimes more moved by the distant than by the present, and so may it have been even with Goethe. The three sleepless nights are however questionable, or even one: that must be a playful extravagance of the Doctor. Moreover, Goethe, impressible though he was, was too healthy, physically and psychically for such

effect from such cause. When Frau von Stein (the fascinating portrait was of her) learnt this from Zimmerman, she wrote that she would gladly hear more of Goethe, and should like to see him.

Frau von Stein, wife of Baron von Stein, Master of the Horse, was one of the chief ladies of the court. She was a woman captivating from her appearance, her manners, her intelligence, her accomplishments, her culture. The mother of seven children, she was thirty-three years of age when Goethe came to Weimar, — six or seven years older than he was. Goethe arrived in Weimar on the seventh of November, 1775. His second note to Frau von Stein (the first is without date) is of the third of January, 1776. On the twenty-eighth he writes to her: —

"Dear Angel, I am not going to the concert. For I am so well that I don't wish to see the crowd. Dear Angel, I sent for my letters, and it pained me that among them there was not a word from thee, not a word in pencil, no good evening. Dear lady, suffer me to love you so much. When I can love any one more I will tell thee: will leave thee unplagued. Adieu, Gold. Thou understandst not how much I love thee."

With all the fervor of his nature Goethe gave

himself up to this new passion. The calm, discreet, self-possessing object of it knew how to keep it alive without letting it consume him or herself. Frau von Stein in Weimar did for the man what Frau Boehme in Leipzig did for the boy: she tamed his wildness, she tempered his exuberance. Feminine sympathy was always a need with Goethe, and here he had it from an experienced, cultivated, fascinating woman of the world, older than himself. That in the beginning she had much to do to keep him within bounds, the following note from Goethe on the fourteenth of April shows:—

"Wherefore should I worry thee, dearest creature! Why deceive myself and plague thee, and so forth. We can be nothing to one another, and are too much. Believe me, were I to speak with perfect openness to thee, thou wouldst in all agree with me. But just because I see things as they are, that sets me distracted. Good night, dear Angel, and good morning. I will not see thee again — only — thou knowest all — I have my heart — All that I could say is naught. Thenceforth I will see thee as one sees the stars! Think of that."

Where was the Baron Stein, the father of those seven children? Well, the Baron was hardly at home once in a week. He and his

wife were very good friends; but there was no love lost between them. At that period there was in Germany great facility and frequency of divorce. It is related that one evening, in a goodly German city, at a large card-party, a lady sat down to a table with three husbands, one in possession and two renounced, the four playing together a very amicable game of whist. A lady friend suggests that a fourth husband was probably hovering round the table. The story is representative, even if it be not ocularly true. Such being the state of law and opinion on marriage, Goethe and Frau von Stein might have come together as man and wife, if the disparity in years between them had been reversed, if those seven children of Stein had not been born to her, and other ifs whose contingencies are not at this distance of time distinctly discernible. While Goethe was in Italy, ten years later, there was a report about such a marriage, mentioned by Schiller in a letter to Koerner of November 23d, 1787: "It is said Goethe will remain at Naples, and has resigned his office. He wished to marry Frau von Stein, and demanded a title of nobility of the Duke in order to do so. Her family, however, opposed it. This is said to have disgusted him with his situation and with Weimar."

Several months before, in August, Schiller had written as follows about Frau von Stein: "A truly original and interesting person; and I can readily understand why Goethe is so devoted to her. You cannot call her beautiful, but her face has an earnest and frank expression which is charming. She is a person of much feeling combined with great common sense. She has received more than a thousand letters from Goethe, and from Italy he writes to her every week. It is said that the connection between them is perfectly pure and blameless." That the relation between them was of this character, the tone and substance of Goethe's letters to her through those many years go to confirm. He opens one of his plaintive missives with these words: "And so this relation, the purest, most beautiful, truest, that I ever had with any woman except my sister, this too is to be broken up."

What would one not give for only half a dozen love-letters of Shakespeare? From Goethe we have more than a thousand, filling three volumes. The title of the volume is, *Goethe's Letters to Frau von Stein, from* 1776 *to* 1826. But only those written from '76 to '86 can properly be called love-letters. These ten years, to be sure, occupy two and a half of the

three volumes. Goethe not only loved Frau von Stein, he enjoyed her society intellectually. She could understand him: he could be confidential with her, and be sure of an intelligent sympathy.

The larger number of his written communications to her are notes, many of them very brief, sometimes in pencil, just asking how she is, sending flowers or fruit or vegetables; but the shortest ends or begins with words of endearment. One ends: "Adieu — if I only could live without loving." In the middle of another he comforts himself with having had "glorious hours with Wieland." A day or two afterwards, July 24th, 1776, he writes from the mining district at Ilmenau, forty miles distant: "Didst thou think of me as I of thee! No, I will not have it so! will feed on the melancholy of my old fate, not to be loved where I love." A fortnight later, still in Ilmenau, he writes: —

> "Ah, when thou art near
> I feel I ought not to love thee.
> Ah, when thou art far away
> I feel, I love thee so much."

And in the same letter: "Dear Angel! I have been writing on my *Falcon*. My Giovanna will have much of Lili in her: but thou wilt allow me to pour in a few drops of thy being, just

enough to tinge it. Thy relation to me is so holy, singular, that I now for the first time feel it cannot be expressed with words : people cannot perceive it."

Frau von Stein, the most distinguished woman in Weimar, would have been distinguished anywhere. A token of this was the especial friendliness towards her of the Duke and Duchess, themselves by nature both so highly gifted. The following note from Goethe, February 20th, 1777, shows the footing on which she stood with the Duke, and gives an insight into the easy, simple manners of Weimar at that period : " I have advised the Duke to dine with you to-day : he is not in the best spirits. If you will have us, we will come towards one. But don't have any formality. Herewith I send old wine. Addio."

A year later Goethe writes to her : " It is handsome of you that you wish to feed with preserved fruit him whom you no longer love. I thank you for it, although it looks as though you sent me good things in order that I may not come to eat them with you."

In the spring of 1778 Goethe made a journey with the Duke to Leipzig and Dessau. The following is the close of a letter written from Woerlitz : " I perceive that with men I have far

less intercourse than formerly. And I seem to get nearer and nearer to the goal of the dramatic, as I get clearer insight into how the great play with men, and the Gods with the great. Adieu. Don't fail to write to me to Leipzig. Greet the Duchess, Stein, Waldner, the Prince, and Knebel." Knebel, through a long life a staunch friend of Goethe, was tutor to the Duke's brother.

Goethe has been reproached with being too conservative, and with having too much deference for rank. Conservatism was a necessary ballast to keep his eager faculties from rushing with dangerous swiftness before the impulse of a bold, powerful, originating mind. The conservatism which in one less richly endowed might have been narrowness, in him became a broad virtue. His respect for rank never made him do or say anything unbecoming an honest and an honorable man. In these respects he had traits in common with Washington ; and where are two men of their generation who did so much to overthrow established conditions and initiate new epochs ? No one saw men and things with a surer eye than Goethe ; and even when the subject was Saxon Dukes, of Meiningen, Gotha, etc., cousins of his beloved chief, he spoke what he thought to one with whom

he was on the intimate terms he now had got to be with Frau von Stein. In the autumn of 1778 he writes from Eisenach: "To-morrow the hunting will be swinish, nor do four or five Saxon Dukes in a room make the best conversation. I have just come from Wilhelmsthal. On the way I talked much with you, dear Gold, which I wished to write in full: but it has all vanished. I have had again all kinds of disappointments, as you can well conceive. At the same time I have fine hopes for my thirtieth year: In my twenty-ninth I am still such a child."

Between Fritz, one of the children of Frau von Stein, a year or two old when Goethe came to Weimar, there grew up a warm friendship. Goethe kept the child with him, sometimes for days and weeks, and when he came to be seven or eight years of age, took him on excursions and short journeys. Goethe thus opens 1779: "Fritz woke me before four and prattled in the New Year. I send a happy New Year, dearest, and sweet-cake. Fritz wishes to be off again. Will you have me to-day at dinner?"

Titles are much prized in Germany: they constitute a kind of sub-nobility. The obtaining of one is an event in the life of a German burgher; and even to Goethe, at that phasis

of his career, it was important, and from the earliness with which it was conferred on him, very significant, that the highest title, below titles of nobility, and one which the numerous nobles with the prefix *von* are far from despising, should thus almost in his youth be bestowed on him. He bore it for the remaining fifty-two years of his life, and thus announces to his beloved friend the new honor: "N. B. The Duke has given the title of *Geheimerrath* [Privy Councilor] to Schnaussen, Lynkern and me. It seems strange to me that I, as it were in a dream, in my thirtieth year, come into the highest dignity that a burgher in Germany can reach. *On ne va jamais plus loin que quand on ne sait où l'on va*, said one of the famous climbers of the earth."

On Sunday morning, the fourteenth of May, 1780, Goethe writes: "Have the goodness to send me three chocolate cups and chocolate for three persons. I have visitors. I beg to come to you as guest to dinner."

In the September following he is at Ilmenau. He was endeavoring to revive activity in the mines, which for some time had been neglected. Here is an extract which shows what he was doing and thinking and feeling: "The seventh; evening. We mounted to the high summits

and crept into the depths of the earth, and how rejoiced we should have been to discover the nearest traces of the great forming Hand. The man is sure yet to come who will see clearly. We wish to prepare the way for him. We have discovered beautiful great things which give the soul a swing and expand it into the truth. Could we but soon give occupation and bread to the poor moles here! On the Snowtop the view is very fine. Good night: I am tired. Thinking and chatting were still possible, but not writing. Pretty incidents — good night: it is idle to try to narrate.

"Friday, 8th September. After a ten hours' sleep I awoke in good spirits. O, that it were my calling to be always in motion and in the open air. Willingly would I bear all the annoyances incident to this kind of life. Afterwards I talked over and looked into various matters. The curse that should fall upon the serpent, presses upon men, who creep on their bellies and eat dirt. Then, for a washing and purification, I read some Greek."

From a letter dated Zillbach, a few days later, here is another characteristic passage: "We arrived late, because princes and princesses can never get away from a place at the right hour, as Stein [her husband] remarked as

the time pressed heavy upon him, while his Serene Highness was trying guns and pistols. As for me, I took out my Euripides and seasoned this insipid quarter of an hour.

"Then the greatest gift for which I have to thank the Gods is, that through the rapidity and variety of thoughts, I can split a clear day like this into a million parts, and thus make a small eternity.

"Like a cheerful Mirza I travel to the famous Fair of Cabul: nothing is too small or too large for my eyes or my wishes, and when I have bargained and paid my money, I fall in love with the Princess of Cashmere, and now enter upon the great journeys through deserts and forests and mountain-gorges, and thence to the moon. Dear Gold, when at last I wake out of my dream, I always find that I love thee still, and long to be with thee."

Towards the end of February, 1781, he thus announces the death of Lessing: "Scarcely could anything sadder have happened to me than the death of Lessing. Not a quarter of an hour before the news arrived I was planning to pay him a visit. We lose much, much in him, more than we believe."

January, 1783, opened for Goethe with an invitation from the Duchess of Gotha in an

autographic note, of which here is a translation: —

"GOTHA, *2d January.*

"Although you have already given a declining answer, I nevertheless venture once more to invite you to our ball on Thursday. Nobody here knows a word of this invitation but Frau von Seckendorf. If you wish to be very obliging, come Thursday noon, because we dine with Prince August. Till then, farewell, and come, and that early. CHARLOTTE."

The Duchess Charlotte would have been a benefactress to Prince August and his dinner-party had she brought Goethe with her; and in justice to that ducal and titled company be it said, the great plebeian's talk would have been listened to with delight and deference. It is related that once at the palace in Weimar nearly the whole company had gathered round the poet in another room, leaving the Duke almost alone. "Come," said he, "we must do like the rest;" and he joined the circle of listeners around Goethe.

The note of the Duchess of Gotha Goethe sends to Frau von Stein, writing on it a comment: "I have just received this letter, dear Lotte, by an estafette. What a restlessness in

princely limbs: they can neither sit still themselves nor let others sit still. If there were a French turnpike; but a road like the passage of the Red Sea by the Israelites, according to the description of Lessing's critic. There is a thaw-wind blowing, and what is worse than all, I don't feel like it. Do say that I had better not go, in order to settle me. I will write her a kind letter; that, I hope, will satisfy her. Before spring no one gets me out of my nest for pastime.

"Send me my books. Keep the engravings.

"The wind has spoilt a skating party. I hoped also to welcome thee before or after dinner on the smooth element. Adieu, beloved. Write me a word."

With no other correspondent was Goethe so confidential as with Frau von Stein. Warmth of affection will melt into liquid flow feelings, opinions, convictions, which otherwise run into no mould of words. Through her his inmost was stirred, and took delight in coming to the surface for her eye. The year 1782 is one of the richest in letters and intimate confidences. I translate a few short passages or sentences, giving the dates.

"I have my head full of ideas and cares. No cares on my own account, for to me Fortune

blows right upon my back; but so much the more for others, for many. For one's self one can, after all, find the right road; for others and with others it seems to be almost impossible." January 20.

"Dearest, don't wonder that the rich are so sick and miserable: I wonder that they even keep alive." Gotha, March 3.

"Wilt thou, dear Lotte, have me some dinner prepared to-day: my people are so busy, and I wish to stay at home. I will send for it towards one." May 25.

"How much better were it for me if, clear of the strife of politics, I could, dearest, devote myself near thee to Science and Art, for which I was born." June 4.

"I was made for private life, and cannot understand why fate has patched me into the administration of a state and a princely family." September 17.

"The snow is welcome; it brings to my memory past winters, and many a scene of thy friendliness. Farewell, thou sweet dream of my life, thou cordial of my pains. To-morrow I have a tea-party." November 21.

"If I have not ever new ideas to work up I become as though I were ill." December 28.

"I have not gone out to-day, but have been

looking into old papers and books, and in a wilderness of formality have found much that is human." February 1, 1783.

"I am hard at work, and concern myself about the things of the earth for the sake of the earthly. My inner life is with thee, and my kingdom not of this world. Adieu, best one. Send me a note if possible. Adieu.

"Fritz has just come back in high spirits from his coal-works, and will write some more on his letter. Adieu. I love thee in him, and him in thee." April 16.

"The court takes away all joy, and never gives joy." April 20.

"How much I owe and shall owe to thee, dear benefactress, and wherewith can I thank thee? I am well; only it is a hard task when one undertakes to bring the discord of the world into concord. The whole year through I hardly come upon a single satisfactory business, and am ever pulled hither and thither, by people's troubles and ineptitudes." April 24.

"Here I found what was to be expected. The people of the court complain of tediousness, of walking, of driving, of standing, of dust, heat, hills, etc. They praise the scenery highly, and have no enjoyment of it.

"To my great delight the elephant's skull

has arrived from Cassel, and what I seek for is beyond my expectation visible in it. I keep it hidden in the little inner room, in order that people may not think me crazy. My hostess believes there is porcelain in the huge box. . . .

"I am to receive one of the earliest copies of *Voltaire's Memoirs*, and will send it to you at once. You will find, it is as if a God (say Momus) or a low God were to write about a king and what is elevated in the world. This is generally the character of all Voltaire's witty writings, and is stamped upon these pages. Not a drop of human blood, not a spark of sympathy or propriety. On the other hand, there is a lightness, a fineness of mind, a firmness, that are enchanting. I say fineness of mind, not elevation. He may be likened to a balloon which, through a peculiar floating power, swings itself above everything and sees beneath it plains where we see mountains." Eisenach, June 7, 1784.

"Fritz sends you this charade: —

"I keep me ever beautiful and cannot see,
And my companions are dejectedness and smart:
I am both old and young, an agéd child I be:
Now, reader, guess me quick, I bide within the heart."

February 2, 1785.

"Greet Stein. Since your departure I have

not seen him: he was never at home when I sought him." September 11, '85.

"I am diligent, am busy with something that interests me, and shall give the day to it. For the evening I look forward to the joy of going through *Hamlet* at thy side, and of explaining to thee what thou already understandest better than I." January 8, 1786.

It was on the third of September of this year that Goethe set out for Italy. Six weeks later he writes to Frau von Stein: —

"TERNI, *October* 27, 1786. *Evening.*

"Sitting again in a cave, which a year ago suffered from an earthquake, I turn my prayer to thee, my dear guardian Angel! How spoilt I am, I feel now for the first time: to live ten years with thee, beloved by thee, and now in a strange world. I said to myself it would be so, and nothing but the highest necessity had power to force me to take the resolution.

"Let us have no other thought than to pass our lives together."

This may be interpreted to hint that there was some truth in the rumor which Schiller reported to Koerner. And there are similar, one might say significant, expressions of devotion for months before he started for Italy.

Her letters to him would throw light upon this interesting point; but it may have been on that very account chiefly that she withdrew from Goethe all her letters and destroyed them. How pertinent would be, for example, her answer to this gush from Goethe in a letter of more than a year earlier, the eighth of September, 1785: "Love me, thou best of all the feminine beings that I have ever become acquainted with; keep me in thy love, and believe that I am thine, and will and must remain thine."

About a year after his arrival in Italy, while spending part of the summer at Castle Gandolfo, near Rome, Goethe was fascinated by a young lady from Milan. Frau von Stein was far away, and in the easy, free life of a public resort he was thrown much with the fair Milanese, and, as the common, expressive phrase is, he fell desperately in love. Did this imply effacing of the image of his long-cherished correspondent in Weimar? He could carry two, three poems, *Faust*, *Tasso*, *Iphigenia*, in his brain at the same time, working on this or that one according as moods were propitious. Could he carry two fair creatures in his heart without their jostling one another? Perhaps the gentlemen of Utah could help us to answer this psychological question. It turned out

that the lovely Milanese was already betrothed. From some cause, not, so far as we know, connected with Goethe, the match was broken off; but nothing matrimonial came of Goethe's attachment.

On his return from Italy personal relations with Frau von Stein were renewed; but they were only friendly. He wrote notes, not without some of the old words of endearment; but they were less frequent, and lacked the former glow. In one of them he thanks her for a breakfast she had sent him; but it is evident that he had not eaten it with the gusto of a lover. To have such a lover cool, after ten years of tender devotion, was a trial, and Frau von Stein had been a woman of extraordinary equanimity not to be deeply pained by the alienation, and of extraordinary magnanimity not to show how deeply she was wounded when his love for Christiane Vulpius came to light. This caused a rupture. Some years later friendly relations were resumed, and they corresponded at intervals until her death. On her death-bed, January, 1827, in her eighty-fifth year, she requested that the funeral procession should make a détour from its natural course, so as not to pass under Goethe's windows, fearing that the sight of it would give him pain.

Goethe's first note to her was written in the opening days of 1776; his last, on the twenty-ninth of August, 1826. Here it is: "The accompanying poem, my dearest, ought properly to end as follows: 'but to see affection and love maintain themselves through so many, many years between near neighbors, is the highest that can be given to man.'"

One is rejoiced to see that the great and still fresh old man can at seventy-eight cast in this particular instance so gratifying a glance over the past fifty years, and pleasantly summon Frau von Stein to share the gratification; but the above passage cannot be cited as one of those wise, happy generalizations that are so often met with in his pages.

Of a poetic feeling-full nature, one of the urgent needs is sympathy, and fortunate was Goethe that, in the prodigal vigor of his early manhood, he had a Frau von Stein to at once cordially and thoughtfully listen to his intimate confidences. A clear-minded, cultivated woman, in high position, who was proud of his love for her, and who, while keeping him at a certain personal distance, eagerly followed his aspirations, and was able to value his gifted nature, and into whose ready ear he could pour his latest thoughts on whatever, from without

or from within, interested or troubled him: it was a rarely-enjoyed prerogative of genius, and helped to keep his mind in abounding activity, and at the same time at ease. An important section it was of his adult education. She at once stimulated and calmed him; she kept him at a healthy glow. With some tempering of the Italian's phrase, Goethe might almost say of his Lotte what Petrarca said of his Laura: "The little that I am, I am through that lady, and if I have any fame or glory, I should never have reached it, had she not cultivated with such noble feelings the very small seed of virtue which nature had deposited in me."

Capacity of growth, of endless growth, is a distinctive quality of the human being. To man's bodily and to his animal increase there is a quick bound, as there is to that of all other bodies and animals of the earth. But spiritually and, through his spirit, intellectually, there is no cognizable bound to his expansion and improvement. In this expansibility there is among men, as among tribes and races of men, a tall scale of degrees. Goethe was one of those who ever keep growing; his being unfolded itself continuously; he had an insatiable curiosity in far as well as near directions; his soul sought to satisfy itself by seeking satisfactions

out of itself. Such growth is through the higher sensibilities. In a man's mental nature these are the hungry elements that feed themselves daily, and through this feeding (in which they use the intellect as their spoon) add to his mental breadth and stature. What gives appetite and momentum to these elements is of course the central vitality, the inward eagerness and thirstiness. But this internal movement may be much obstructed or much furthered by outward surroundings. Considering Goethe's impressible and passional nature, it may be looked upon as a happiness for him and his unfolding that during those ten initiatory years he was linked by such warm devotion to a Frau von Stein.

Many, even true, estimable, intelligent men, do not grow continuously, at least not on earth. After middle life they are quiescent, they experience no fresh thirsts ; they get merely more shrewdness, and more skill in manipulation on the old tracks ; the man as man hardly advances. Long years ago, while studying the discoveries of Gall, I met with the remark that few professional men can take up with new ideas when they have reached forty. After that age most men harden in their early opinions and beliefs. Some, and they not always

without intellectual vivacity, grow, as the boys say, like a cow's tail downwards.

A few weeks after his return from Italy, while walking in the Park at Weimar one summer day, Goethe "was accosted by a fresh, young, bright-looking girl, who, with many reverences handed him a petition." The petition entreated the good offices of the great poet in behalf of a young author then earning a scanty livelihood in Jena by translating French and Italian stories. The young author was Vulpius, and the blooming girl who presented the petition was his sister Christiane, who from that moment added another, and a most important one, to the loves of Goethe.

"Her father," says Mr. Lewis, "was one of those wretched beings whose drunkenness slowly but surely brings a whole family to want. He would sometimes sell the coat off his back for drink. When his children grew up they contrived to get away from him, and to support themselves: the son by literature, the daughters by making artificial flowers, woollen work, etc. It is usually said that Christiane was utterly uneducated, and the epigrammatic pen glibly records that "Goethe married his servant." She never was his servant. Nor was she uneducated. Her social position in-

deed was very humble, as the foregoing indications suggest: but that she was not uneducated is plainly seen in the facts, of which there can be no doubt, namely, that for her were written the *Roman Elegies* and the *Metamorphoses of Plants;* and that in her company Goethe pursued his optical and botanical researches. How much she understood of these researches we cannot know: but it is certain that, unless she had shown a lively comprehension, he would never have persisted in talking of them to her. Their time, he says, was not spent only in caresses, but also in rational talk. This is decisive. Throughout his varied correspondence we always see him presenting different subjects to different minds, treating of topics in which his correspondents are interested, not dragging forward topics which merely interest *him;* and among the wide range of subjects he had mastered, there were many upon which he might have conversed with Christiane, in preference to science, had she shown any want of comprehension of scientific phenomena. . . . While, however, rectifying a general error, let me not fall into the opposite extreme. Christiane had her charm; but she was not a highly gifted woman. She was not a Frau von Stein, capable of being

the companion and the sharer of his highest aspirations. Quick mother-wit, a lively spirit, a loving heart, and great aptitude for domestic duties, she undoubtedly possessed: she was gay, enjoying, fond of pleasure even to excess, and, — as may be read in the poems she inspired, — was less the mistress of his mind than his affections. Her golden-brown locks, laughing eyes, ruddy cheeks, kiss-provoking lips, small and gracefully rounded figure, give her the "appearance of a young Dionysos;" so says Madame Schopenhauer, *not* a prejudiced witness. Her *naïveté*, gayety and enjoying temperament, completely fascinated Goethe, who recognized in her one of those free, healthy specimens of nature which education had not distorted with artifice. She was like a child of the sensuous Italy he had just quitted with so much regret; and there are few poems in any language which approach the passionate gratitude of those in which he recalls the happiness she gave him.

"Why did he not marry her at once? His dread of marriage has already been shown; and to this abstract dread there must be added the great disparity of station: a disparity so great that not only did it make the *liaison* scandalous, it made Christiane herself reject the

offer of marriage. Stahr reports that persons now living have heard her declare that it was her own fault her marriage was so long delayed; and certain it is that when — Christmas, 1789 — she bore him a child (August von Goethe, to whom the Duke stood godfather), he took her with her mother and sister to live in his house, and always regarded the connection as a marriage."

In an exceptional proceeding of this kind a decisive question to be answered is, in how far, surrender having been at first made to passion, duty afterwards atones: in how far did the higher sentiments mingle with and sanctify impulses? Suppose that Goethe had sent Christiane and her infant to a remote town with a small stipend, he would have done what in such cases is mostly done by men of his worldly elevation, and what the world tacitly sanctions. In taking Christiane to his house to cherish her there as though she were his legal wife, he obeyed the dictates of a truer manliness, a nobler self-respect, a higher dutifulness, than if, with a worldling's cold and virtually immoral regard for the *convenances*, he had hidden her away out of sight, and thus seemingly broken (for essentially it never can be broken) the sacred bonds which bind to-

gether the parents of a child. Had he married her at once, — considering where he was and what he was, — he would have done an act of heroism. He did the next best thing to that. What he did he has told in one of his short, exquisite lyrics, which I attempt to regive in the charming simplicity of its verse and phrase.

FOUND.

I roamed at random
Athrough a wood,
To seek for nothing —
That was my mood.

I did in shadow
A flow'ret spy ;
As stars 'twas lustrous,
Or a wee eye.

I wished to break it ;
Then soft it said :
Shall I be broken
Quickly to fade ?

With all its rootlets
Dug from the loam
To my own garden
I bore it home.

In a still corner
I gave it room ;
And there it thriveth
Ever in bloom.

Goethe of course, like other men, did things and said words he had better not have done

and said ; but few men are so apt to repent of such as he was, striving ever to amend. And, spite of the facts involved in this long chapter, not often is a man of so much passion so well controlled.

To have and to hold before ourselves a moral standard, is one of our precious and most significant human privileges ; but a standard, to be a standard, must be swung high and free, not nailed to creed or custom, and especially not held in the palsied hand of Phariseeism. We are all given to quick condemnation of the errings of our neighbors ; and this is perhaps a form of self-fortification, and the self-complacency accompanying our censure may be a form of self-protection ; but let us beware that the feeling shoot not into presumption or self-righteousness, for then we wound ourselves. When the fellow-man whom we bring before us happens to be one whose fellowship is to us an honor and an exaltation, let us pause and summon to our aid all the best there is in us ; and then, if there be any of the best in us, we shall in the place of judgment put sympathetic regret that our great brother has been so self-inflicted with trouble. In that case we shall be the better for his trials ; but if we cry out for judgment, we shall be the worse.

For his manly treatment of Christiane in taking her to his house Goethe suffered socially in Weimar. Had he at once married one so much below him in station, the ostracism would only have been moderated. He was not condemned because he had violated right or duty, but because he had defied custom and conventionalities. In spite of his high solid position, he could hardly have held out but for his lively, inexhaustible, internal resources, literary and scientific and personal.

Goethe's love for Christiane was not a momentary passion, a transient fancy. Ten years after their first meeting, in a letter to her, written on a journey, he regrets not having taken something of hers with him, were it only her slipper, that he might feel less lonely. And when she died, in 1816, he was overcome with grief; kneeling at her bedside he exclaimed: "Thou wilt not forsake me! No, no; thou must not forsake me!" He concludes a letter to Zelter on the eighth of June, 1816, with these words: "When I tell thee, thou stout, sorely tried son of earth, that within these few days my dear little wife has left me, thou wilt know what that means."

During the partial sack of Weimar, after the battle of Jena, in 1806, Christiane showed her

usual devotion to Goethe, helping to protect him against some French soldiers who got into his house. On this dangerous occasion she gave proof of remarkable courage and management. Whether this brought to a head a resolution before formed, in order to legitimate his son, or that troublous times make duties press more urgently upon the heart, whatever the moving cause, five days after the battle of Jena Goethe married Christiane, their son being then seventeen.

Yet, during the latter half of their union of twenty-eight years, Christiane was one of Goethe's sorest trials. From her father she inherited the tendency and habit which lost him. Goethe bore with her with exemplary forbearance, for he was a patient man and a dutiful, and of great tenaciousness of attachment. This too was a part, and not the least serviceable part, of his discipline on earth. Throughout his prolonged life Goethe was doing for himself, — and, through the transfusion of himself into his writings, for others, — what, by an able critic of Jowett's Plato in the *Edinburg Review*, is said to be the purpose of Plato's Dialogues: he was educating the soul. A man who consciously educates his soul, unfolds and uplifts his moral and spiritual being, for this

being is the very nucleus of a soul; and thus he satisfies — in so far as his individuality can satisfy — the demands of justice, of piety, of love.

Goethe has been called a pagan, and there is perhaps a little more truth in the designation than that it merely implies his manysidedness. In his mental make there was great wealth of sensuosity. To illustrate Goethe by contrast, in Wordsworth there was deficiency of sensuosity: Wordsworth was not at all pagan, notwithstanding the magnificent exclamation at the close of one of his greatest sonnets: —

> "Great God! I'd rather be
> A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
> So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
> Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
> Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
> Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

And Wordsworth, unlike Goethe, was the opposite of manysided; nor do we wish that he had been manysided. Nor would we have Goethe less of a pagan. There is something of sacrilege in touching, even with so impotent a modifier as a wish, one of these chosen organisms, which the divine breath has moulded to finest issues.

Of Goethe's paganism the *Roman Elegies*

are a resplendent exemplification. Inspired by Christiane, the easy, graceful vesture for them was furnished by his recent studies and delight in Ancient Art, and by the images and sensations supplied by his luxuriant residence in the epicurean climate, amid the glowing scenery, of southern Itlay. Observe in some of the best of the *Elegies* how mere animal feelings are spoken out, naively and innocently, because shame as yet is not, shame being born when the spiritual has grown strong enough to rule, or, if not to rule, to warn, the animal. The essence of classical paganism is, that the soul is not wakened to full consciousness and sense of regality. (Is it yet wide awake?) That Goethe could so vividly reproduce the classic pagan feeling, shows the Greek side of his manysidedness, and that Christiane inspired just a pagan love. The *Roman Elegies* are more antique than Goethe's *Iphigenia.* Christiane turning out fat and gross, what a comment on and moral to the *Roman Elegies!* And what a retribution for a pagan love. Had Goethe not been much more than a pagan, when the gross and not the refined in Christiane grew with years, he would not have bound himself to her by the legal bond of marriage, but would have treated her as many modern

pagans would have treated her. But in Goethe, besides and above the classical pagan, was the Christian man and the honorable gentleman.

On the fifteenth of January, 1813, Goethe thus concludes a letter to Zelter: "Mr. Pfund I had great pleasure in seeing, although only for a short time. His chief recommendation to me was his attachment to thee. His bride I began to love when she was a child of eight years, and in her sixteenth year I loved her more than was reasonable. Thou wilt, perhaps, on this account be more friendly towards her when she comes to you.

"And now the heartiest farewell."

This was Minna Herzlieb, the adopted daughter of Fromman, a bookseller of Jena, and a valued friend of Goethe, who spent in Fromman's family circle many happy hours. It was about seven years before the date of the above letter that Minna was sixteen. (Sweet sixteen again). The fascination was mutual. We smile now while reading of the affair: but at the time it was the cause of pain and alarm to friends on both sides. The two lovers had to be parted; and this was effected by sending Minna away to school! To this, Goethe's penultimate love, we owe *The Elective Affinities*. Minna is the original of Ottilie.

As Goethe was a born poet, so was he a born lover. His nature demanded that he should ever carry about with him in his brain some image of womanhood to cheer him and agitate him. One might think that, when he had gotten to be seventy-four, he had reached the period wished for by Socrates, when he would be no longer subject to such solicitations. But Goethe seems to have been of the marrow of the Patriarchs, the type of whom is still extant, Sir Samuel Baker telling of a Sheik in Abyssinia who leaped alertly down from his white camel to greet him, and who, now in his eightieth year, had just taken another wife, aged fourteen. I saw Goethe in 1825, when he was seventy-six. Neither in his countenance nor carriage did he then bear any detracting signs of age. He was one of those men in talking with whom you have no thought of their years.

In the summer of 1823 Goethe met at Marienbad Fraulein von Lewetzow. Mr. Lewis thus records his last love: "A passion grew up between them, which, returned on her side with almost equal vehemence, brought back to him once more the exaltation of the *Werther* period. It was thought he would marry her, — and indeed he wished to do so; but the representations of his friends, and perhaps the fear

of ridicule, withheld him. He tore himself away; and the Marienbad Elegy, which he wrote in the carriage as it whirled him away remains as a token of the passion and his suffering."

Thus, for sixty years had Goethe's mind been warmed and inspired by his loves. His feeling for woman was a subterranean heat which fertilized his being, breaking out at times into flames which will ever be a beauty and an illumination to mankind, and which were sometimes a terror to himself. Not a woman of the many whom he loved — and by each one of them he seems to have been beloved in return — ever complained that she had been trifled with or wronged. We have seen how Frederika and Lili received him in after years; how tenderly regardful was Frau von Stein on her death-bed; how devoted to him was his wife. When he was sixty-seven, Kestner's wife, who more than forty years before had so troubled his heart that he could depict with a pen of fire the "sufferings of the young Werther," she, now a widow and the mother of twelve children, visited him at Weimar.

But there was one love to which his fidelity was unswerving, with whom he never had a coldness or a quarrel, and whom to have de-

serted would have been his ruin. Who she was he tells in the following

PARABLE.

When I to the market hie
Through the throng,
And the pretty maiden spy
The crowd among ;
Go I here she comes to me,
But above ;
No one can about us see
How we love.

"Old man, wilt thou ne'er be quiet?
Ever maiden!
In the time of youthful riot
'T was a Kaetchen.
Who is 't now makes thy days sweet?
Say, old youth."
Look there, how she me doth greet, —
It is TRUTH.

## VI.

### FAUST.

FAUST is the poetical reverberation of Goethe's individual life, an artistic transfigurement through a many-toned song — by one who had a genius for such singing — of the passions, thoughts, strivings, doubts, conflicts, acquisitions, upreachings, of a great poet and a great man, a deep-thoughted, warm-souled, well-poised man, whose profuse gifts were crowned with a rare literary gift of fullest, finest, most perspicuous expression. In earliest manhood Goethe conceived his *Faust*, and finished it in his eighty-second year, thus carrying it in him and with him for sixty years of the most variably productive, and the most continuously and methodically active life, and, may it not be added, the most successful in the achievement of its many high aims, that was ever lived on earth.

*Goetz von Berlichingen* was no sooner conceived than it was begun, no sooner begun than it went rapidly to completion. *Goetz* was

local and partial. *Werther*, too, swung in a small circle, albeit one with the intensity of a whirlpool. These two, sent forth before Goethe was twenty-four, launched him upon the world, and gave the first strong impulse to the fame which, at first hanging round him like a caressing breeze, strengthened with every decade of his lengthened career, and to his tomb blew incense from all the highest hearts in Christendom.

*Egmont* was begun about the same time; but here Goethe felt that greater knowledge of history was needed than he then had, and, what is more, knowledge of the spirit of history, which only years of active, storied living can bring. Thence he did not finish *Egmont* till twenty years later. *Faust* was conceived among the first, but not published till 1790, and then as a fragment, its author soon discovering that the compass which such a subject demands for its fitting presentation, demands too the multiform experience of an abounding, earnest life.

When in 1808, in his fifty-ninth year, Goethe published the First Part complete, he dedicated it, not to the present or to a future, but to a past generation, to those dearly-remembered ones, the companions of his early manhood, the most of whom had already passed from the earth: —

"They hear them not, the following songs,
The souls to whom the first I sang."

Overmastered by such memories and by Faustic visions, he concludes: —

"What I possess I see as in the distance,
And what is gone comes back in firm consistence."

In all Goethe's pages there is hardly a strain purer, warmer than this dedication, so tender and deep is it, so instinct with the heart's life, so graceful and dirge-like.

Next to the Dedication comes a Prelude in the theatre, the three interlocutors being the manager, the poet, and the representative of fun. Thus to present in contrast what is popular and what is excellent, what fills the theatre and what delights the capable auditor, what draws and what lasts, this is the conception of a poetic brain; and to put it into the words we find here, implies, besides a poet, a high poet who had practiced the function of Director of a theatre. The Manager calls upon the poet to furnish him a piece which shall make the crowd fight round the ticket-office for seats, like a hungry throng round a baker's shop for bread in a famine. The Poet's answer opens: —

"O speak not of that motley crowd
At view of which the spirit flags;

Hide it from sight, the billowy, loud,
That us, unwilling, downward drags:"

and ends with one of those generic distichs often met with in Goethe: —

"What shines is only for the moment good:
The genuine is for future ages food."

One speech of the "Poet" I translate in full, it is so characteristic and so fine: —

"Then me too give the times once more
When I myself was still a-growing,
When streams of song from swollen core
Unceasingly were lifeful flowing,
When the world still by mist was shrouded,
And every bud with wonder fraught,
When I the thousand blossoms sought
That all the scented valleys crowded.
Nothing had I, yet all was mine;
Deep, yearnful happiness, illusion fine.
Give me untamed those quick desires,
The never quenchéd thirst for truth,
The strength of hate, love's mighty fires;
O give to me again my youth."

It was Swift, I believe, who said that no wise man ever wished himself younger. The saying is so significant it deserves to be said by a wiser man than Swift. Goethe being one of the wisest, this wish for a return of youth could not be the expression of a permanent mental state in himself. Of the poetic mind the most precious privilege is, that, to its last day, buds

*are* "with wonder fraught," that Nature looks ever fresh and blooming, and that the mystery in which all things are shrouded has even a diviner look as insight deepens with years. One mark of genius is "the carrying on of the freshness and feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood." This is said by Coleridge, and the saying draws import from his profound and poetic consciousness. That Goethe did not intend the longing for youth to be taken as representative of the poetic character is shown by the ironic comment of the comic personage, which thus begins: —

> "Of youth, dear friend, thou sure hast need
> When in the battle foemen press thee,
> When lovely girls, with tender deed,
> Hang on thy neck and would caress thee."

This prelude and dedication are, by their beauty and significance, a becoming prolusion to the great tragedy which, as Goethe said to Eckerman, "ranges from Heaven through Earth to Hell," and, it may be added, reascends at the close of the Second Part to whence it started. The "Prologue in Heaven," for which there is example in the first chapter of Job, is a poetic invigoration of the Faust legend. By the concurrent judgment of all the most æsthetically competent, the Hymn of the Archangels

has long since taken its place as one of the grandest poems in literature. The following translation, first printed forty years since, I have studiously revised, and offer it as one of the scores of attempts that have been made to render into English this "astonishing Chorus," as Shelley calls it.

THE LORD; THE HEAVENLY HOSTS; *afterwards* MEPHISTOPHELES.

*The three Archangels come forward.*

RAPHAEL.

The Sun in wonted guise is sounding
With brother-spheres co-rival song,
On his predestined journey bounding
With thunder's ordered movement strong.
The sight to Angels vigor lendeth,
Though none his being fathom may;
The works whose reach our thought transcendeth
Are grand as on Creation's day.

GABRIEL.

And swift and swift the earth is streaming,
With changeful pomp of gloom and light;
In hues of Paradise now beaming,
Now deep enwrapt in awful night;
The sea, against broad rivers striving,
On rock upheaves its foam and wrath,
And rock and sea are onward driving
In the swift globe's eternal path.

MICHAEL.

And storms in conflict wild are pouring
From land to sea, from sea to land,
And form, while raging fierce and roaring,
Of purpose deep a circling band.
There flashes lightning's baleful glaring
Before the coming thunder's way
But these, O Lord, thy orders bearing,
Revere the calm gait of thy day.

ALL THREE.

The sight to Angels vigor lendeth,
Though none thy being fathom may;
Thy works, whose might all thought transcendeth,
Are grand as on Creation's day.

The voice of Mephistopheles, right upon the close of such a Chorus, is a leap from light into sudden darkness. Mephisto is a cross between Voltaire and Caliban; an irreverent, witty mocker, like Voltaire, but truncated of Voltaire's humane sensibilities and his aspiration for the beautiful, in place of which he has the utterly unlighted moral nature of Caliban, "which any print of goodness will not take." Having the intellect of the higher type of man unilluminated by the higher sympathies, he exhibits the cynical bitterness consequent on spiritual deprivation. In his first speech to the Lord, after aiming ironically at the "high words" of the Angels, he adds, "My pathos

sure would make thee laugh." But most distinctly he shows us what he is in his picture of human nature, he, with his utter moral and spiritual deficiency, being able only to see man's littleness. His speech to the Lord he thus concludes :—

> " A little better would he live,
> Him wouldst thou not the show of heaven's light give ;
> He calls it Reason, and uses it to be
> Beastlier than any beast you see.
> He seems to me, saving your reverence,
> Like one of these long-legged grasshoppers,
> Which ever flies and flying springs,
> And in the grass its old song sings.
> If only he would in the grass lie close ;
> But he in every dirt-hole sticks his nose."

Mephisto is a boundless resource, giving Goethe great freedom of play, because Goethe had it in himself to stretch behind Mephisto, as background, a far sun-lit horizon of humanity.

From the puppet-plays seen in his boyhood, and from the current legends and printed narratives of the doings of Doctor Faustus, Goethe got the first hint of his *Faust*. Goethe's Devil is another personage from the Satan of Job. Mephisto has the benefit of modern culture, especially that of the eighteenth century. He is a polished, well-bred man of the world. Lord Chesterfield might have invited him to dinner,

to give his son an exemplification of the manners of a gentleman. Nor would he have protested angrily against the tissue of Mephisto's talk. Nor to-day would his Lordship's many well-dressed pupils sq protest. Instant arrest, by a sneer, of any jet of aspiration, ironical flings at any pretense to purity and innocence beyond the age of childhood, sensuality draped with a captivating veil, thrown over it so that it shall not offend a drawing-room taste, *persiflage* accepted as the best criticism: need we go back to Chesterfield and European courts of a hundred years since, to find social gatherings where such is the tone, where an invisible Mephistopheles is the sprightliest guest? The detractive, down-pulling, cynical, negative element in our human mixture is ever active, and is ever embodied in excess in individuals who, sunk into the petty self, where they find no folds for expansion, discountenance virtuous effort, scorn enthusiasm, jeer at all plans for the betterment of human conditions.

But Mephistopheles has a deeper quality and function. When Goethe, like the author of Job, gives up Faust to the temptations of the Devil, he makes the Lord say: —

> "Sleep man's activity is aye a wooing,
> Easily he takes to unconditioned rest;

Thence, one will be as comrade 'mong the best
Who goads him, and as Devil must be doing."

Here Mephisto represents the animal nature of man, his *vis a tergo*, the driving power of desire, which, pushed to extreme, brings him to ruin, but, here on earth, shares his being in an indissoluble partnership with his upper powers of reason and emotion. And these powers would languish but for the fire of animal impulse, which they in turn temper and guide. Possibly in man's struggles for and in the flesh the soul is braced and tutored for the higher phase, when, free of the body, it shall glow with more steadiness and brilliancy through an early earth-drawn vigor.

On earth the motive power of self-seeking desire drives man into culpable aberrations, from which an innate capacity for the better retrieves him, or has in the long run the resource to retrieve him. Thus the Lord, when giving Mephisto leave to try himself on Faust, tells him he will stand abashed when he is defeated ; for, —

"A worthy man, even in his darkest wrath,
Has yet a consciousness of the right path."

And now Faust makes his entry in that long, plaintive, self-tormenting soliloquy, which ends by his throwing himself desperately upon nec-

romancy. Necromancy is a bootless effort to get, by a short cut, insights to divine knowledge, which can only be got through the nobler capabilities of reason and spirituality. With a feverish hope he unclasps the book of the great magician, Nostradamus. This scene opens with Faust seated at his desk, late in the night, in a narrow, high-vaulted Gothic room. He thus begins his wail: —

> "Ah me! Have now philosophy,
> Juristic jargon, medicine too,
> And even, alas! theology —
> All have I studied through and through;
> And, wretched fool! with all my lore
> Am no bit wiser than before."

Goethe's own mental restlessness in early manhood, his disappointment with life at its threshold, his depression from yearnings unsatisfied by his studies, all this, told in his autobiography, formed a prerequisite matrix for the conception and moulding of Faust. This youthful discontent may be morbid as well as healthy: it may result from feebleness and want of balance, as well as from streaming fullness of faculties. In Goethe, who from his childhood had been eagerly gathering knowledge, and whose nature was forth-reaching, aspiring, imaginative, it betokened the intellect-

ual genius and the naturalist, — the naturalist in the broadest, finest sense ; the man who looked to Nature and her resources, so vast and so minute, so prodigal and so definite, so material and so spiritual, for precepts and solutions. He was a naturalist as poet, as man of science, as practical worker. How sound and important, and how naturalistic is his maxim, that we can only thoroughly know what we have practiced or felt.

Nature, with her infinite and beautiful phenomena and her unfailing laws, — laws at once simple and subtle, — Nature is God's book. What poor Faust, and, in large measure, Goethe too, had been giving all his time to, was man's books, and books that were not man's calm, conscientious, religious, disinterested interpretations of God's book, but shadowy substitutions for that book, and substitutions which, while they were utterly insufficient, were arrogant and worldly-minded. In one of Mr. Bayard Taylor's many valuable elucidative notes to his translation of Faust is the following : —

"In the Augsburg puppet-play, Faust exclaims : 'I, too, have long investigated, have gone through all arts and sciences. I became a Theologian, consulted authorities, weighed all, tested all, — polemics, exegesis, dogmatism. All

was babble: nothing breathed of Divinity! I became a Jurist, endeavored to become acquainted with Justice, and I learnt how to distort justice. I found an idol, shaped by the hands of self-interest and self-conceit, a bastard of Justice, not herself. I became a Physician, intending to learn the human structure, and the methods of supporting it when it gives way; but I found not what I sought, — I only found the art of methodically murdering men. I became a Philosopher, desiring to know the soul of man, to catch Truth by the wings and Wisdom by the forelock; and I found shadows, vapors, follies, bound into a system.' "

The man who wrote that was a worthy precursor of Goethe, and was wise much beyond his generation, aye, and beyond our so vaunted age. He who studies only man's books, whether medical, juridical, philosophical, or theological, gets further from, instead of nearer to God and his will. (And the wish to get nearer to God is a divine, irrepressible instinct in the breast of man, which all healthy studies would further.) Thence man's mind, as at once the great spring and reservoir, gets partially dried up, and turbid and unhealthy.

When, through the forms of Nostradamus's book of magic, Faust, with terrible agitation,

invokes the spirits, a red flame leaps out of the air, and in the flame a spirit, from which Faust recoils, exclaiming, with averted face, "Horrible Visage!" The spirit so taunts him for his fears that he gains courage to answer in kind:

> "Flame-seed, shall I thee fear?
> 'Tis I, 'tis Faust, thy peer."

Then it is that the spirit, who is the earth-spirit, describes his function in those compressed, buoyant, meaning-full lines, ending with that magnificent couplet, in uttering which the great poet seems to have caught hearing of the boundless music of creation: —

> "I foam life's flood, act's bubbling blood
> With a stormful breath,
> In a ceaseless motion!
> Be it birth or death,
> An eternal ocean,
> Or shifting or fleeing,
> A fiery being,
> I ply the resounding great loom of old Time,
> And work at the Godhead's live vesture sublime."

The spirit soon vanishes, and in a few moments there is a knocking at the door of Faust, who exclaims: —

> "O death! I know it — that is my famulus."

The famulus was half student, half servant, and in this one Goethe would represent the

dull, prosaic, acquiring, but not aspiring, still less, inspired, industrious gatherer. Wagner is the spokesman of the flattest commonplace, of shallow philistinian self-complacency, a literary man in a Pickwickian sense, without soul for strength or originality or poetry, one who lives on the husks of thought. Faust, though almost unbearably bored, treats the poor fellow with respect, and before he dismisses him, on account of the lateness of the hour, utters, in answer to his platitudes, much good irony, of which take this as a sample : —

> 'A sealed book are the Annals of the past;
> What you the spirit of the ages find
> Is but the writer's individual mind,
> In which the bygone times are glassed."

The departure of Wagner is followed by a long, rather too long, soliloquy in the same tone of despondency, in which he winds himself up to the pitch of suicide. He has raised the deadly bowl to his lips, when his hand is arrested by the breaking forth of Easter bells and a chorus of Angels : —

> "Christ is arisen !
> Joy to him bringing,
> Whom the stain-flinging,
> Inherited, clinging
> Faults did imprison."

In the scene "Outside the Gate," Goethe presents pictures drawn with the sharp fidelity of frequent, thorough study from nature, lighted with that penetrating, divulging light which streams only from the poetic mind. The moving concourse of apprentices, servant-girls, students, tradesmen's daughters, soldiers, citizens, beggars, issuing out of a German town for a Sunday-afternoon walk, passes before us so distinctly, though rapidly, that their various natures and characteristics are laid bare, and through a medium of humor and irony that gives the picture an everlasting charm. The comfortable, self-satisfied citizen has no misgivings but that he is disclosing a perfectly proper feeling when to his companion he says:

> "Naught better know I, on Sundays and holidays,
> Than talk of war and the fierce deeds of war,
> When away there, off in Turkey afar,
> One fighting people on another one preys."

A little further out we come upon peasants dancing under the linden trees. After a characteristic song, such as only Goethe could write, they gather round Faust, an old peasant being spokesman, to utter thanks to him for having, with his father, saved so many from the plague shortly before. When Wagner, gaping philistine that he is, congratulates Faust, as

they pass further, on the feelings he must enjoy at receiving the homage of this crowd, Faust, with sad retrospect, tells him how less than little they did, concluding with that bitter self-denunciation which should be printed in letters of gold where all medical students could daily read it :—

> "And thus with most infernal pills,
> Among these valleys and these hills,
> Far worse than did the pest we blazed.
> Thousands did I the poison give ;
> They withered off, and I must live
> To hear the audacious murderers praised."

Faust comes home accompanied by a strange poodle-dog, who turns out to be Mephistopheles. Through scenes of magical *diablerie*, enacted by Mephisto according to the popular legend, at his first interview with Faust, there peep subtle satiric meanings. Finally Faust makes his compact with Mephistopheles. The reader may scarcely be aware how close this comes to himself. In Faust is only presented with the ingenuity and the richness of invention, and the breadth, beauty, and power of a great poet, what we are all of us doing in a greater or less degree, namely, selling ourselves to the Devil.

A man who tries to reach contentment and happiness by giving the reins to his greeds and

his lusts, is attempting as possible a thing as he who would make a torch out of an icicle. Every time the glittering spear is thrust into the flame to be lighted, some of its substance is melted off; and the hotter the flame, the less will the icicle become a torch, and the more rapid will be the dissolution. Faust, under the fascination of Mephistopheles, makes the futile attempt; but he, through inward higher resources, recovers in time to save himself, as, in the first scene between the Lord and Mephistopheles, it was declared he would. Faust sows his wild oats with a sublime prodigality.

But many people, of less passionate and powerful natures than Faust, do not recover on earth, but, through habitual, even petty, selfishness, go down to the grave (for with them it is a going down) under the grip of Mephistopheles. Others are so fascinated by the promises of desire and selfishness, which are the deceitful devil within us, that they prostitute themselves to indulgence and active egotism their whole earth-life long; while Mephisto, with the heartless irony for which he is noted, makes them follow on foot through the mire, he sitting on his fearful steed with that careless security so well given by Retch in his outline of the ride of Faust and Mephistopheles.

Whenever a man tries to help himself at the cost of another; whenever he heaps within himself sensual and worldly fruition; whenever he postpones the needs of the soul to the luxuries of the senses; whenever, in short, he strives to make a torch of an icicle, he has sold himself, in so far, to the Devil. In this compact there is one clause certain to be fulfilled, and that is the forfeiture exacted by the Devil for his services; in other words, the unfailing loss of so much spiritual power, the sinking of the higher flame, for every excess of sensual or selfish gratification. So that those who keep on selling themselves, from day to day and year to year until Death seizes them, get into such unmanly, unheavenly habits on earth, that in the sphere beyond they have to serve a lengthened term of purgatorial disinfection before they can find heaven there.

This is the deep moral of Faust masked behind a mediæval legend set forth with the glittering, gorgeous pomp of superlative poetry.

I will not dwell on every scene of the wonderful diorama unrolled by the poet, albeit each is as tempting as the one before it. That where a student comes to consult the renowned Doctor Faust as to his studies, and Mephisto puts on Faust's gown and receives him, is one

of the richest in humor, wit, and keenest satire. Of the soliloquy of Mephisto, when Faust has retired and the student has not yet entered, I make room for four lines, the first two and the last two, which compress the whole dozen lying between them : —

> "Science despise, and Reason's light,
> Which are of man the highest might, —
> Then e'en had he not sold him to the Devil,
> He still would surely come to evil."

The compass of the first line is contracted by the word Reason, the only one we have in English to render the German *Vernunft;* but *Vernunft* embraces far more than, and other than, the highest intellectual power, — Reason ; it implies with this the highest spiritual power in man, — his emotional capacity.

The first place Faust and Mephisto visit when they set forth on their adventures is a famous resort in Leipzig, familiar to Goethe in his student-days, called Auerbach's Cellar, "where every day's a festival." This scene is admirably low comic, and gives Mephisto a field for his necromantic tricks. By its rollicking fun it forms, too, an artistic counterpoise to the dread tragedy that is about to begin. The next scene, in the Witches' Kitchen, plays a similar part, besides having the practical end of

getting the Witch to brew the draught that shall renew Faust's youth. Both scenes show the flexibility of Goethe's powers, and the truth to nature which, through the most fantastic sport, underlies every presentation. And even such scenes show his accurate and multifarious knowledge of life, a knowledge gathered by the persistency of many talents and a rare capacity of observation, enlightened, sharpened, refined by genius.

And now we come to the chief, the great personage of the drama, the marvelous Margaret. Here we have the resources and attractions and the transmuted harvests of feeling, exhibited with the trueness of a deep, sure sensibility, and the clearness of the brightest Art, — exhibited through a representative of womanhood in its terrible liabilities. In our human life-drama on earth woman is the protagonist of feeling.

Margaret is one of those creations that astonish us forever by their simplicity. A girl with only the education that is to be had in the narrow lodgings in the back street of a German town; whose circle of thought hardly reaches to the larger thoroughfares; whose life is a contented routine of spinning and cleaning in the plainest home, — this girl, without losing her

homeliness (in the pure original meaning of the word), without enlarging her very limited vocabulary, or purifying her provincial speech, except in the last tremendous scene, is made to shine with an immortal radiance, a beautiful possession to the world forever, a figure, a power, added to the higher literature of all nations. Listen to her love-song : —

"My peace is gone,
My heart is sore !
I'll find it, ah ! never
And never more.

"Where him I can't have
There is my grave,
For me is all
Turned into gall.

"Ah ! my poor head !
I've lost my wits,
And my poor brain
Is all in bits.

"My peace is gone,
My heart is sore ;
I'll find it, ah ! never
And never more.

"For him only look I
Out on the street,
From home only go I
Him to meet.

"His lofty gait,
His noble size,

His mouth's sweet smile,
His powerful eyes.

"And of his speech
The flowing bliss,
His hand's warm clasp,
And, ah! his kiss.

"My peace is gone,
My heart is sore,
I'll find it, ah! never
And never more.

"My bosom yearns
For him so dear.
Ah! could I clasp
And hold him here!
And kiss him, kiss
Just as I would,
Upon his kisses
O! die I could."

The songs in Faust, tender and pathetic, like this one, or religious, like those that usher in Easter, rustic or jovial, like those of the peasants and the boon companions in Auerbach's cellar, or the wild, wailful outpourings of the spirits, show, besides the far range of Goethe's sympathies, the lyrical quality of his genius. This, indeed, is shown in the structure and character of the whole work, which, though dramatic in form and in the colloquial development of the personages, is not dramatic in its build and foundation. It is not an unbroken

evolution through events caused by collisions between the participants, events intimately chained together in necessary sequence by the individualities of the agents. Faust is a lyrical drama, and as such has a less compactly consecutive evolution. That it is so detracts not an iota from its worth. Its worth is bound up in that of its author's genius, which was by no means exclusively, but was predominantly, lyrical. Goethe, giving here freest play to all his powers, lyric, epic, dramatic, produced one of the masterpieces of literature, hardly second to any other masterpiece. I put in *hardly*, because every time I look anew into Faust, its deeps seem deeper, its beauties fresher, its variety still infinite. In Shakespeare's masterpieces, and only in them, there is a warmer resplendence of diction, a more voluminous roll of rhythm, a bolder and readier leap of thought when in its finest fervors poetic imagination makes metaphor its sudden steed.

Of dramatic capacity, Margaret herself is a high exemplification. And Martha, too ; do we not see her and know her as distinctly as any one we daily meet in the flesh ? Her picture is in those two lines of Mephisto after he has told her, no doubt with his subtlest leer, that he might, on conditions, himself exchange rings

with her, and she, no doubt with her best smile, answers him, showing no reluctance.

MEPHISTO (*aside*).

"'Tis high time now I stirred:
She's one would hold the Devil himself to his word."

The stains of Martha are not wholly from within. The world she lives in did much to dye them into her, and to deepen them. Under better conditions she might not have been a go-between, nor have driven her husband from his home. Martha has much need of our charity, and, rightly read, even she will help us to know that the least stained of us need charity too.

Those two garden scenes, how simple and natural and how profound they are! I pause in the second one to give my readers the famous passage which may be called one of Goethe's confessions of faith. Margaret, very woman-like, questions Faust as to his belief in God. He answers: —

"Who dares Him name,
And who proclaim,
I believe in Him?
Who that may,
Feeling, say,
I believe in Him not?
The all-infolder,
The all-upholder,

Holds and upholds He not
Thee, me, Himself?
Arches not heaven there above?
Lies not the earth here firm below?
And mount not up eternal stars
Friendly twinkling over us?
Behold I thee not eye to eye,
And is not all
Pouring through head and heart,
And weaving in eternal mystery
Invisibly visible around thee?
Fill to its utmost scope therewith thy breast,
And when thou'rt wholly in the feeling blest,
Call it then what thou wilt —
Call it bliss! soul! love! God!
I have no name for it!
Feeling is all in all:
Name is but sound and smoke,
Curling round heaven's glow."

As supplement to this I translate from Chancellor von Mueller's *Conversations* a passage which is a still fuller confession of faith. On the twenty-ninth of April, 1818, the Chancellor drove with Goethe out to Dornburg, near Weimar, where, in presence of a lovely landscape, animated by the beauty of the sights and odors of spring, Goethe was in one of his best moods. Among other things said by him Mueller reports the following: "The power to ennoble the sensuous, and to give life to the deadest material through marriage to the idea, is the fairest guarantee of our supersensuous

origin. Man, much as the earth attracts him with her thousands of phenomena, lifts his look inquiringly and longingly to the heaven which arches over him in immeasurable space, because deep within himself he feels clearly that he is a citizen of that spiritual kingdom, belief in which we cannot set aside or give up. In this forefeeling lies the secret of the incessant striving after an unknown end ; it is, as it were, the lever of our searching and thinking, the tender bond between poetry and reality."

The passage from one of the Garden Scenes of *Faust* I have translated line for line and word for word, clinging closely to the metre as well as to the thought of the original. But the feminine or double rhymes I have not sought to preserve, except where they came easily. Thus, in the very first lines, for the German double rhymes, *nennen* and *bekennen*, I have the single rhymes, *name* and *proclaim*. When translating German verse, to insist on finding in English a double rhyme to match in every case the German double rhyme seems to me a mistake, and a procedure which defeats its own purpose. The first fidelity required of a translator is fidelity to the idiom and habits of his own language. Now, in the matter of double endings, the German and English languages

are not only unlike but opposite. In German nearly all infinitives of verbs as well as their inflections, all plurals of nouns and adjectives, besides many other words, have no accent on the last syllable; and thence double rhymes are so abundant that the verse-writer cannot avoid the very frequent use of them. Open a miscellaneous collection of German poetry, and you will find that one half the rhymes are double. Sometimes in a whole poem of over a hundred lines every line ends with a double rhyme. In German this frequency of double rhymes, being an unavoidable result of the structure of the language, is natural to the ear, used from childhood to the double ending of so many words. Such verse is melodious and fluent because it is in accord with the genius of the German tongue. Not so in English, for here double rhymes are not abundant; and thence in an English Anthology you have to look sometimes through several pages to find a single pair of double rhymes. They are not organic in our tongue. Hence, when in translating from German you wish to keep pace with the German abundance of double rhymes, you have to strain hard at phrase or meaning, to substitute roundabout for direct constructions, even to quit the track of faithfulness to the

meaning, to sacrifice sense to sound. And then, after all your labor and sacrifice, even when you have succeeded in holding to the sense, without additions or suppressions, you have a page which sounds un-English, a page through which there runs a debilitated tone. Nay more, a long unbroken succession of double rhymes, not being accordant with the structure and habits of our English tongue, has an unhealthy sound, and therefore does not render faithfully the healthy German sound; and so, at last, after all your efforts, your bendings and forcings, you fail of your main purpose.

Of all poets Goethe is the most direct in his diction, the simplest in his words. He seldom transposes words, he never overloads them or with them. His style is so admirable because, besides issuing out of a richly-endowed poetic mind, it is the easy result of most intimate union between what he has to say and the how to say it. His thought clings closely to the substance, whether that substance be in a sentiment, an object, a sensation, an idea; and his words are the immediate, transpicuous interpreters of his thoughts. The translator of Goethe, besides other qualifications, should have his pen stored with the fullest vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon English. If he runs much into

Latin-English, whether for meanings or rhymes, he runs away from his original, especially if that original be *Faust*.

Another point may as well be mentioned. Goethe is frequently irregular in the placing of rhymes and in the length of lines. In this he suited the wants or the flow of the thought. He would be the first to allow the translator the same liberty for the same motive, and would not strictly require him to be irregular in all cases just where the original is so. By this freedom, as by the frequent rejection of double rhymes, the translator gains in ease and naturalness, and in essential fidelity.

I pass over two short scenes, each full of life and significance, one at the fountain and one before the shrine, to come to the first death, after which the deep tragedy flows rapidly to its end. Valentine, a soldier, the brother of Gretchen, comes home to find the name of his dear beautiful sister tossed about on the tongue of scandal. Mephistopheles and Faust he sees under Gretchen's window, where Mephisto sings a song to a guitar. Valentine rushes forward, smashes the guitar, and in the fight which ensues is run through the body and slain, reproaching poor Gretchen, who comes out

of the house, with her shame and his death. Mephisto and Faust fly.

. Now is the time, after seduction and bloodshed, for the Walpurgisnight on the Brocken in the Hartz Mountains, the Witches' Festival. For what does this caldron of bestiality and extravagance, of juiceless fun and gloomy insights, of the grim and the grotesque, stand for, except the dregs which lie at the bottom of the human heart, and now and then blow themselves up into momentary bubbles, the foul imaginations of Hamlet, the black, jointless fancies that will haunt us, like waking nightmares? Roots in the mind this ghastly phantasmagoria has, or it could not grow into a popular legend to be hung by a great poet upon the Brocken.

Faust is momentarily busied into forgetfulness; but at the end of the diabolic spectacle how tragically imaginative is the glimpse of the spectre of Gretchen with a thin red ribbon around her neck!

Gretchen (Margaret), as poetic creation, that is, an invented personage combining fidelity to every-day truth with features heightened through genial transfiguration, combining vital individuality with generic breadth, is not below any woman in Shakespeare: not second to

Juliet, or Imogen, or Ophelia. By her intense feminine loveliness she holds all hearts, and so deeply does she throb with humanity, that we love her not for her beauty and tenderness only, or her sufferings, but, through our fellow-feeling, for her very crime. This is the test of Goethe's Art, — whose roots are in the depths of his own deep being, — that by the fearful deed of infanticide the whole previous structure is not shattered. It receives a drapery of mourning, and instead of repelling the sympathetic reader, draws from him only warmer tears.

In the last transcendent scene, Gretchen, in prison the day before her execution, half blind with the soul's terrible darkness, does not know Faust, who comes to rescue her : she is busied, not about herself, but about her brother, her mother, her child, all of whom have come to their death through her. Her awful half-madness, how sublime it is, the night in her soul illuminated with an auroral streaming, her terrible words fitted by clear intelligence, whereby after a few moments she knows Faust, and knows herself with fearful vividness ! She heeds not Faust's urgent prayer to fly with him. At last he cries : —

"Dearest ! dearest ! the day is waking.

MARGARET.

Day! Yes, it is come! The last day is breaking:
My wedding it was to have seen!
Tell no one thou'st already with Gretchen been.
Alas for my crants!
Well, so let it be!
We again each other shall see;
But not at the dance.
The crowd is pressing, so silent all.
The square, the street,
Hold not their feet.
The wand is snapt, hear the bell's call!
Hand on me now they've laid!
To the block already I'm lashed.
At my neck flashes the blade
That at others so often has flashed.
Dumb lies the world as the grave!

FAUST.

O! Had I never been born!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Up! already 'tis morn,
This talking, and staying delaying!
My horses are neighing.
Come, come! or you're lost.

MARGARET.

What rises there so like a ghost?
He! He! send him away:
What seeks he on this sacred day?
He seeks me.

FAUST.

Thou shalt live.

MARGARET.

Judgment of God! Myself to thee I give!

MEPHISTOPHELES.

Come, come! or I leave you with her in the lurch.

MARGARET.

Thine am I, Father! Save me!
Ye Angels! Ye holy ones, guard me,
Camp ye around here to ward me.
Henry! I shudder for thee!

MEPHISTO.

She is judged.

VOICE, *from above*.

Is saved!

Mephistopheles, representing the animal passions and greeds, unpurified by the emotions and having the understanding at their call, how ready he is to condemn, to pass sentence, to punish; while from the upper region of Love comes the voice, "She is saved."

MEPHISTOPHELES *to* FAUST.

Here to me!

*Vanishes with* FAUST.

VOICE *from within, dying away.*

Henry! Henry!

And the curtain falls on a scene unsurpassed, among the everlasting splendors of Poetry, for

truth and pathos, and simple beauty, and æsthetic fineness.

Margaret is saved, and Faust, now carried off by Mephisto, he too is to be saved. And so we come to the Second Part of *Faust*.

Faust is to be saved through activity, through a high activity, and finally a disinterested activity. This busy career carries Faust along all the broad highways of life, the political, the æsthetic, the scientific, — Art, Nature, History. What Goethe had witnessed, participated in, practiced, mastered, meditated on for sixty years, here is the stage (a far broader stage than in the First Part) to present it all, compressed, and moulded into poetic forms.

The Second Part of *Faust* is at bottom a commentary on life, civilized life, in its divers phases, its multifarious aspects, shapes, expressions, conformations, and a commentary by one who had lived in and through more of these phases and forms, and more thoroughly, than any other man of his time or of any time; and he at once a practical worker and a ceaseless thinker, and, to crown all, a sovereign poet.

Faust and Mephistopheles are the pegs on which to hang this commentary. We of course wish to know how Faust is saved, but it is more for the sake of learning Goethe's philoso-

phy of life than from interest in Faust. Indeed, Faust loses what little individuality he had, and he and Mephisto, who is still occasionally sparkling, are both become mere mouthpieces, mouthpieces, to be sure, with musical voices of a precious quality.

I shall give a rapid sketch of the unfolding of the several acts, if unfolding can be said of parts between which there is no necessary connection, except as each one is an arena, and that but partially, for the activity of Faust himself. The sketch will be rapid because the first and great part has already taken up more space than was apportioned to the two.

The first scene opens with Faust lying restless, weary, on a flowery turf at twilight, attended by Ariel and Fairies. Ariel sings him to sleep, and so steeps him in Nature's balsams as to take away even the stings of remorse. Faust awakes refreshed, renewed.

Then we are transported to the Imperial Court, the Emperor on his throne surrounded by his Ministers and courtiers, with the Astrologer on his right hand. But the Emperor misses and asks for the Fool, whose place is on the other side of him. The Fool is reported to have just fallen down drunk. At that moment Mephisto appears, and through a most polished

and successful impudence, as is the way with gentlemen of his stamp, gets possession of the Fool's place. Then we have successively from the Ministers picture on picture of the universal dilapidation and impoverishment and of the woful mismanagement of public affairs. Weakness and emptiness are everywhere. Even the Emperor's cellar is exhausted. This of course is just the element for Mephisto, who cannot refrain from putting in a word, having as little modesty as any other political adventurer. But, through that coincidence there is between merely worldly and prudential sagacity and the higher spiritual wisdom, Mephisto says wise things. He prompts the Astrologer to utter this among other sound precepts : —

> "Who good would have, must first be good :
> Who joy would have, must cool his heated blood."

And, after telling them out of his own mouth how in their distress money is to be gotten, he concludes : —

> "And ask you who shall bring this gold to light :
> A man gifted with mind and Nature's might."

Whereupon the Chancellor exclaims : —

> "Nature and Mind ! To Christians this should not be said.
> Thence has the ban on Atheists been laid,
> Because great danger is in speech like that.
> Nature is sin, Mind is the Devil's self :

They nurse between them Doubt, the Elf,
Their misbegotten, mongrel brat."

Goethe, even in his comparatively advanced day, felt the blight of the blasphemous theological teaching, that "Nature is sin, Mind the Devil's self." Nay, do we not still feel it sorely, even in this, the freest country on the globe? Are not the free in thought and inquiry and speech, earnest seekers in Nature's inexhaustible, beautiful domains, still liable to be branded as Infidels and Atheists by formal Christians, by pharisaical Christians, by pew-paying Christians, by all pseudo-Christians, whose name is many Legions? The belief that Nature is sin and the free use of mind dangerous, is by no means shut up in the Middle and darker Ages.

Nature, what is Nature? All that is, from the clod under your foot, to the furthest star over your head, from the commonest impulse of the heart to the finest aspiration of the soul. All phenomena, mental and physical, psychical and sensible, spiritual and corporal, are embraced in Nature, are all manifestations of the Supreme Mind; and we who, with our marvelous faculties, are the highest manifestation of the Supreme Mind that we can know of, we are endowed with power to observe and decipher these phenomena, with power to learn the laws

which govern them, laws spiritual as well as physical, moral laws as well as intellectual, and, through the discovery of law, with power to learn the will of God. And the sure, true way is this, to learn that will; for the tribunal is ever open to all, and witnesses are always waiting to be called, and have in them nothing but the truth. Some of the old Stoics were shrewd, when in their philosophical classification they put the study of the nature of things and the study of the nature of Deity into one and the same division; and that was a fine insight of Epictetus, when he said that, besides the power of seeing things as they are, a grateful disposition is needed to understand Providence.

Men, or, I should say, some of the clearer, manlier thinkers among men, are beginning to be aware that Law, that is, the will of God, is discoverable in the spiritual and moral region as it has been and is discovered in the physical, and by the same means, by the observation and collation of phenomena, in a truth-loving spirit. That the domain is deeper, subtler, gives it only a higher claim to the best method. What resistance was made in times past to discoveries in the physical domain, and are still made, we all know. Read the ridicule thrown on Morse, in Congress, for his telegraph. Still stronger

will be the resistance in the moral and spiritual domain ; for here rooted beliefs in theological inventions which teach that "Nature is sin," and the vested interests of Priesthoods are to be overcome. But those who believe cordially (not with a mere notional belief) in God and good, must believe that in the end truth will triumph over the most stubborn resistance. Forty years ago who could have dreamed that the feat of Ariel, of putting a girdle round the globe in forty minutes would be surpassed by human science? Enlightened men, men enlightened through purest religious sensibilities steadied by reason, are now girdling Heaven, binding Heaven to the Earth ; and in less than forty years, effects will be wrought by this binding to which those of the terrestrial telegraph will be fleeting and superficial. Let us return to Faust, who, as one of the inventors of the mighty Art of Printing, will not have been impatient at the interruption.

The Imperial German Court of the Middle Ages is but nominally the scene of the first Act. The reality is taken from France at the end of the reign (reign over rottenness) of Louis XV., of which, together with that of Louis XVI. and the French Revolution, Goethe was born in time to be an adult witness.

Mephisto not only amuses the king and court, he lifts them out of their starving distress, by inventing paper-money. A fine satiric lunge is that, to make the Devil the inventor of paper-money. The Emperor, emboldened by the display of Mephisto's resources, demands of him a sight of Helen and Paris. This demand Faust warmly abets. Helen is made to represent the Beautiful, through which in part is to be wrought the salvation of Faust. Then comes the "Classical Walpurgis Night" which is a species of graduation, relatively to beauty, of the minor figures of the Greek mythology, through whom and their fantastic movements and speech Faust has to pass to reach the highest antique beauty, represented by Helen. The interlude of Helen takes up the third Act. It was part of the legend that Faust was married to Helen. Of this Goethe avails himself to symbolize by this marriage the union of ancient and modern thought, representing modern Poetry by Euphorion, who is the offspring of the union.

At the opening of Act IV. we are glad to have Mephisto himself again. In the second and third Acts he had been obliged, much against the grain, to accommodate him to classical forms. In the third he appeared as Phor-

kias, who is a kind of antique she-Mephisto, a rebel against the good and the beautiful. Faust and he come to the aid of the Emperor, who, by misgovernment and shallow selfishness, has caused a civil war. They enable him to overcome the hostile faction, and to Faust, in reward of his services, he gives a domain on the sea-shore, where Faust finds scope for a beneficent activity in dyking out the ocean, thus adding a vast area of land for the comfortable habitation and support of men.

In the bargain with Mephisto at the beginning of the First Part, Faust bound himself that (I here borrow from the translation of Mr. Brooks) —

> "Whenever to the passing hour
> I cry: O stay! thou art so fair!
> To chain me down, I give thee power,
> To the black bottom of despair."

And now, in his old age, thinking of the good and durable work he has done, he feels such contentment that he does exclaim to the moment, "O stay! thou art so fair!" And so, having forfeited the bond, he sinks down, and dies. And now ensues a contest between Mephisto and his devils with descended angels for his soul, in which contest the angels triumph, and carry Faust up to meet Margaret who awaits him, herself a blessed spirit.

The Second Part of *Faust* is to the First what the reflex of a rainbow is to the primitive, grand, beautiful phenomenon. It has the same colors, and the same arch hung between earth and heaven, but it is comparatively pale and indistinct, having only a reflected, not a primary life. Feeling being the matrix in which and out of which poetry is moulded, it becomes a law of æsthetics that feeling must, in poetry, generate the thought, not thought the feeling. Feeling is the soft, deep moisture, acting upon which genius makes the rainbow spring. Out of a dry atmosphere the most potent sun can evoke no bow in the heavens; nor with the juiceless materials of the intellect can the greatest poet produce thorough poetry. Some admixture of feeling there must be; and in the most effective poetry feeling is paramount. In the Second Part of *Faust* the intellect tries to be the poetic creator, instead of being the coöperative agent. In all symbolism the intellect is primary and sovereign, and mimics poetic production. In the Second Part of *Faust* symbolic personages represent ideas and purposes, ideas and purposes political, artistic, scientific, and through them the attempt is made to give the life and discipline of Faust. Suppose that Faust had been subjected to

earthly, flesh-and-blood struggles with fellow-workers, competitors in the pursuit and practice of Art, Science, Politics, and that groups in life-like complications had been drawn, with various characterization, such as Goethe the Poet, and the genial worker in all these provinces, had at command, — an apprenticeship like that Wilhelm Meister went through, only Faust's would be deeper and on a more poetic plane: then we should have had vivid, passion-stirred pictures and personages, instead of the spectral forms which now provoke our curiosity without awakening our sympathy. As it is, Faust himself is become a shadow among shadows.

In the First *Faust* the principal personages and scenes are *passionately* real and present; in the Second they are *intellectually* real, and therefore not so present. In the First the personages represent themselves; in the Second they represent something else. They are not beings pulsating with their own hearts' beat, but abstractions, symbols; and thence, not having primitive passions and affections, we cannot lay hold of them with our passions and affections.

This taking up the Greek mythology for prolonged, minute manipulation, is second hand

work, intellectually curious; clothing the figures with symbolical drapery is ingenious; the whole procedure exhibits a vast amount of knowledge, great mastery of the resources and machinery of Art, and little inspiration. The attention is fixed on what the figures mean, not on themselves. This is wearisome. One remove from prose through poetic exaltation and transfiguration is enough, as much as the reader's mind can follow and keep its poise; and when to this is added allegory and symbolism, the poetry evaporates in the allegory, and the substance in the two. In the Second Part of *Faust* one is irritated with an unending intellectual hunt the slipper. The shell is often glancing with light, but the kernel, when found, hardly pays the search. The personages are reflex, remote, mostly thin, and even cold. When Goethe spins threads out of his brain (and only Shakespeare has spun more and stronger ones) we seize them with joy and follow them to the end, sure of a prize; but the seizing, if one can seize them, of filaments fine as gossamer, brings no adequate reward.

Except in relation to ancient Greek mind and activity, Grecian mythology is dead. Into modern relations and literature it cannot be brought and preserve its animation, and who-

ever attempts so to bring it and work it falls into commonplace, — ancient commonplace. Goethe was right to call Helen, when first published separately, a Phantasmagoria. Of the Second Part Helen is the best, except the last scenes, after the bodily death of Faust; and Helen is dream-like, phantasmal, because she is not brought forward on her own account, but is used as a representative, a symbol. To tell one's dreams is forbidden in good company. On paper, whether in verse or prose, dreams, even of kings and heroes, are, to speak plainly, a bore. A great poet cannot animate them, unless, like that of Clarence in Richard III. the dream be short, deep, and portentous. Like most of the Second Part Helen is unreal, faint as the shadow of a candle-flame thrown on the wall by another candle.

With such a plan, the whole is unavoidably overlaid with detail, not detail of fact, but of conception, and therefore hard to grasp and still harder to clasp. The figures are graceful, polished automata, and therefore without succulence. Then one is ever importuned by riddles which, when guessed, lack significance.

As to symbols, there is only one kind commendable, namely, material symbols; an eagle, a shield, a trident, a thunderbolt, a flag. Putting

a symbol into words dissolves it: one is tantalized as by a vanishing vision. It is like wading through a morass for flowers, which often sink out of sight as you reach forth to pluck them, carried down by your very approach.

Is this judgment on the Second Part of *Faust* unjust and untenable? Possibly it is. But to back it I summon Mephistopheles. In the height of the joy of Faust and Helen, at the very crisis in the production of the new spirit, Mephisto addresses wise words to the ancient Chorus. From a cave is heard a fresh, deeply melodious music, — the breath of modern poetry, — to which all listen with emotion. Then Mephisto exclaims: —

> "Listen to the charming song,
> Quickly from you Fables cast;
> All your Gods, the musty throng,
> Let them go, for they are past.
>
> "Henceforth no one you will know,
> We demand a higher spell;
> From the heart must freshly flow
> What upon the heart would tell."

## VII.

### CONCLUSION.

If through the foregoing chapters, fragmentary as they are, some readers shall have a fuller and livelier image than they previously had of Goethe as man and poet, as worker and thinker, my grateful task will be well-nigh accomplished. There only remains that, to get a survey of his life as a whole, I bind into a succinct epitome the successive epochs of his fruitful career. In doing this there will, too, be opportunities for supplying additional traits or facts in illustration of this or that side of the manysided man.

Entering life in 1749, and living until 1832 in the active enjoyment of his high faculties, his large, clear mind mirrored in great measure the agitations and aspirations of the most convulsive, upclimbing, electrical half century that History had yet recorded. In 1755 the earthquake at Lisbon, with its volcanic, instantaneous ingulfing of sixty thousand lives, stirred his thought to interrogations which, in a child of six years, were as strange as they were far-

reaching, A little later, during the war waged so brilliantly by Frederick the Great against France, Austria, and Russia, all banded against him, a French army was quartered upon Frankfort ; and the boy was obliged to hear his hero, Fritz, vilified every Sunday, when he dined at his grandfather's table. "As in my sixth year," he writes in the Autobiography, "the earthquake at Lisbon had brought the goodness of God into suspicion, so I began now to doubt the justice of the public towards Frederick II. My mind was naturally inclined to reverence, and there needed a great shock to shake my faith in anything that is venerable." In his youth and first manhood, brilliant intellects were throwing off startling sparks from that general mental ferment which precedes revolutionary purifications. While a student at Strasbourg he saw, as she first touched French territory, the lovely Marie Antoinette, then only fifteen, smiling and happy, and playful like the child that she was, going, wreathed with flowers and a diadem, to be an illustrious victim in the terrible and sublime sacrifice made to humanity by the French Revolution. In the early manhood of Goethe Washington rose to eminence, and passed from the earth, crowned with his unique glory, ere Goethe had passed out of his

middle age. He saw the rise and fall of the giant Napoleon, who, in his monstrous halfness, did his utmost to "circumvent God." Goethe did not clearly see the ugly side of this halfness, overestimating and overadmiring the ruthless Corsican despot; and thence, not fully sympathizing with or appreciating the moral power latent in the masses of a great people, at the breaking out of the German war of liberation in 1813, he was not hopeful. With the French Revolution in 1830, which expelled forever the elder Bourbons, he had little sympathy. When the news of it reached Weimar, and was in everybody's mind and mouth, Goethe, then in his eighty-first year, gave it but a transient heed, so absorbed was he by a scientific revolution going on in Paris at the same time, whereby, he declared, that "thenceforth in the scientific investigations of the French the synthetic mode of looking at Nature will prevail, and mind rule over matter."

Goethe's childhood was a beautiful bud, whose peeping petals gave hardly a hint, even to the most loving and partial, of the perfume and fruit and powerful seed that lay deeply enfolded within them. And yet, his childhood was brilliant and precocious. Most happy was he in his parents, in the substantiality of their

characters and intellects, and in the contrasts between them, these rich contrasts being in their son melted into harmonious wholeness by the divine fire which gives to poetic genius its vivid individuality. His father was a devotee to knowledge; by study and travel he had cultivated himself with zeal to the utmost of his capacity; a man curt and laconic, very methodical, and ruled, somewhat too stiffly at times, by strict principle. Goethe's mother was one of the most genial of women, fine-tempered, sportful, witty, practical. She was the loving, watchful, pliable protectress of the children against the straight discipline or occasional harshness of the father.

Never was there more hungry learner than Goethe. From infancy to octogenarian age, he was a daily, eager, painstaking gatherer of knowledge. To second this early curiosity and zeal, close at hand were his father's acquirements and lively appreciation of scholarship. The gift of story-telling Goethe inherited from his mother. In his youngest years she cultivated the gift by her sprightly, fanciful inventions, to which the delighted child listened with his big eyes as well as his ears. He was healthily precocious, and at eight could write in Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and German.

At the earliest date he was equally peculiar in his feelings and ways. When but three or four he could hardly be brought to play with other children of the same age, unless they were pretty. One day at a neighbor's an ugly child so affected him that he began to cry, exclaiming: "Take away that black child, I can't bear him." He would not be pacified, and had to be carried home. He began early to write, and when his little brother Jacob died, showed a quantity of papers on which in his ninth year he had written stories and lessons intended for Jacob. The most extraordinary instance of premature thought ever recorded was his comment on a sermon about the Lisbon earthquake, — so extraordinary, that one finds it almost incredible. The preacher had attempted to exhibit, by this catastrophe, the goodness of God. Wolfgang's father asked him (he was not yet seven) what he thought of the sermon. "It may, after all," he answered, "be a much simpler matter than the clergyman thinks: God knows very well that an immortal soul can receive no injury from a mortal accident."

Goethe was taught at home. In this, too, he was happy. Except for a short period, during the French occupation of the house, he had no experience of schools, and that experience gave

him a hatred of them. The schools of Frankfort were then coarse and imperfect. But even were schools more healthily organized and more humanely conducted than they are yet anywhere, a boy who is sensitive, genial, highly gifted, is better out of them until he gets into his teens.

When thirteen Goethe added English to his list of languages, and studied Hebrew. This led him into the Jews' quarter, where he looked inquisitively into their habits and customs. Studios of painters he already had begun to visit, and he was fond of frequenting the workshops of artisans, and of learning something of their crafts. Before he was fifteen he got admitted behind the scenes of the theatre, and into the green room. With open eyes and open heart the glowing boy was an observer and student of men. As he advanced in years his studies expanded. When he got to be fifteen he had reached *Morhof's Polyhistor* (a book to which Dr. Johnson acknowledged profound obligations), *Gessner's Isagoge*, and *Bayle's Dictionary*. His feelings, too, gave signs of the coming man: he fell in love with Gretchen.

As child, as boy, as youth, as man, Goethe was the object of love and favor with men, women, and children. He was himself full of

love and sympathy, and full of truthfulness. People of all ages and conditions made him a confidant. Of life in its countless phases, no one ever saw so much so intimately as he did, beginning so young. In the Autobiography is the following remarkable passage as to the tragic depths of his experience before he was seventeen: "Through my adventure with Gretchen and its consequences, I had early a glimpse of the strange labyrinths by which in cities society is undermined. Religion, morals, law, rank, connections, custom, all rule only the surface of city existence. The streets, bordered by splendid houses, are kept neat, and every one conducts himself when abroad properly enough; but in-doors, it often seems only so much the more disordered, and a smooth exterior, like a thin coat of mortar, plasters over many a mouldered wall that tumbles in the night, the effect of whose crash is the more frightful that it comes in the midst of a state of repose. How many families had I not already seen, either overwhelmed in ruin or hanging on the brink of ruin, by bankruptcies, divorces, seductions, murders, robberies, poisonings; and, young as I was, I had often lent a helping hand. For as my frankness awakened confidence, and my discretion was known, and

as my activity shunned no sacrifice, and even preferred the more dangerous occasions, I had many opportunities to mediate, to hush up matters, to divert the lightning-flash, and do what could be done. Whereby it could not but be that, as well in my own person as through others, I came to the knowledge of many afflicting and humbling facts. As a relief to me I planned many plays, and sketched the most of them. But as the plots were full of troubles, and almost all of these pieces threatened to end tragically, I let them drop one after another."

These deep and sacred confidences, made to one so young in years, came to him through the attractions of his character. He inspired love and trust. He had in him so much of the soul of humanity, that any afflicted member of it who came in contact with him felt his brotherhood. This, his warmly plenteous endowment, gave mellowness and close texture to his thoughts and truthfulness to his poetic embodiments.

Goethe's father had long made up his mind that when his son should be ready for a University he should go to Leipzig. He had been to Leipzig himself. As the time approached, the son preferred Goettingen. Heyne was there, and Michaelis, and other Professors at

whose feet he wished to sit. For his intellectual longings were all towards literature. But the father was not to be moved, neither by the wishes of his son nor the representations of friends. The obstinacy which thus thwarted the secret desires of the son confirmed him in those desires. He inwardly resolved to rebel against Law, and to set up Literature in its place. He had an instinct of his vocation. Goethe was seventeen when he went to Leipzig, — an early age for the freedom of a German University. At Leipzig he belonged nominally to the Law Faculty, but virtually he was a student in the Faculty of human nature, learning, for the most part unconsciously, from men, women, children, social gatherings, fellow-students, his chief lecture-rooms being the streets, the theatre, and the haunts of lively Leipzig.

We have seen that in after years the one grateful back look that he gave to the Professors of Leipzig was to Oeser. He at once appreciated Oeser's teaching, for early in 1770, just after he had quitted Leipzig, and before he went to Strasbourg, in a letter to the bookseller Reich he expressed in clear language his thankfulness to Oeser for having started him on the right track in regard to the Beautiful.

With his fine susceptibilities, behind a keen intellect, which they perpetually stimulated, he would have found this track for himself. But it is the main use of teachers, — whether individual instructors or the lights diffused through an age, — that they give each generation a start from the elevation to which culture has reached as each comes on the stage.

In pursuit of Law Goethe's father, who had a maggot of jurisprudence in his head, sent his son, when he was twenty, to another University. He himself had been at two. At Strasbourg Goethe continued on a more manly scale his studies of humanity, and gave time enough to his father's favorite Faculty to get a degree as Doctor of Law. More valuable to us than his *thesis* on that occasion is a discourse he delivered on Shakespeare to a Shakespeare Society, a remarkable discourse from a young man of twenty-one, showing how strongly he already felt the power and beauty of the greatest of Poets.

From the fullness and readiness of his powers, Goethe was enabled to gratify his father while yielding to the stream of his own mental predilections. At the same time that his best thoughts were given to studies higher than jurisprudence, he had no difficulty in achieving

the degree of Doctor of Law. The man of poetic mind leads two lives: the one interior, within his conceptions and poetic imaginings, the other exterior, the life of daily prosaic necessities. By the calls from the lower he often feels interrupted in his higher life, even when he can do practical work and duties better than most men. Into poems he can put more of the best of him than into tangible week-day doings. Shakespeare, the efficient director of a theatre, as there is reason for believing that he was, and a successful manipulator of money, was probably often fretted at being drawn away from the everlasting Hamlets and Desdemonas he was winding out of the inward rapture of his mighty brain, to look after the costume or elocution of the very temporary Hamlet or Desdemona who was to appear in the evening on the boards of the Globe Theatre.

In minds of this high quality there are, moreover, resources that come not to the surface even in their best work. Goethe speaks openly, bares many secrets of the heart; but in a deep, busy brain like his there are undivulged movements of which men of less profound consciousness have no inkling. While he revealed more than most men, he also withheld more. In the recesses of such minds are

subtleties and flames that never come directly to view, but are kept for inward illumination and refinement.

To please his father, Goethe, Doctor of Law, went from Strasbourg to Wetzlar, the then seat of the highest Law-Court of Germany. To please himself, he translated, while there, Goldsmith, and wrote songs, and wrought into his heart the tragedy of *Werther*, which, in a year or two was to burst upon the world and suddenly conquer for him a European renown.

At this period Goethe made acquaintance with Lavater and Jacobi, two men noted in their day, whose work has hardly survived to ours. With both he opened a correspondence, which continued for ten years with Lavater, and many more with Jacobi. But Goethe so rapidly outgrew them both that the friendship with them cooled. A more important friend, through intimate intercourse and his influence on Goethe at this time, was Merk, a superior man, somewhat negative in nature, but finely critical, who early seized the character and import of Goethe's genius. Herder, the Duke of Weimar, Wieland, all valued Merk highly and corresponded with him. Wieland once declared: "Should it ever come to such a pass with me as no longer to be able to love, I

should nevertheless still love Goethe and Merk."

With inward consciousness of power and genius, strengthened by the fame, which streamed upon him in torrents after the publication of *Goetz von Berlichingen* and *Werther*, with mind aglow through animal and intellectual exuberance of life, overflowing with hopes, projects, wants, aspirations, radiant with personal beauty, Goethe at twenty-five presents a grand, almost ideal image of youthful manhood.

Doering, one of his German biographers, concludes the opening paragraph of his volume with this sentence: "The man who is to be depicted in the following work was by the happy concurrence of accidental circumstances early upraised to be not only one of the most renowned poets, but also to the high, brilliant position in life which he maintained for more than a half century." A grosser biographical blunder was never committed. The commission of it just there is the more remarkable from the soundness of the immediately preceding sentence: "All that we admire in a man rests partly on his inborn capacities, partly on outward influences." Of course; and had Goethe been the son of a Cadi in Adrianople,

he surely never would have been the Goethe we now have, and possibly never would have been known beyond the walls of Adrianople. Nay, had he been born in Moscow or Madrid, he doubtless would have been a very different man from the German poet and thinker of that name, and would probably have fallen much short of his attained altitude. You must have soil, and rich soil, for the largest oaks to thrive in. The gifts of a Goethe need an atmosphere and auxiliary adjacencies in order that they have room to expand. He must have opportunities, but these don't make him ; he enriches them. To another they would not be opportunities. Everything depends on the life and force within. A Goethe, with his inward life and force, cannot be the mere creature of circumstances ; he is their creator. And were there not such creators of circumstances, civilization would stagnate, and then retrograde. Nay, without them, humanity would not rise above savagery, could not go forward and upward.

*Werther* could not have been written except in Germany in the latter half of the eighteenth century. But who could then and there have written it except Goethe? Who but he could have concentrated the lurid heats of the period

into the focus of such an intensifying, transfiguring genius? Another than he might have had his head turned by the fame *Werther* and *Goetz* brought him. Goethe was not to be spoiled. Circumstances he took advantage of, not they of him. He did not allow them to rule him or tyrannize over him: the inward man was too strong for that, too self-subsistent. So with his meeting with the Duke of Weimar, a meeting apparently accidental, which opened into a new, large field of circumstances. What made that meeting prolific, what but the personality of the man, the magnetism of his presence, the fascination of his tongue, the manly grace of his bearing? And when he got to Weimar, the novel surroundings there might have been dazzling, or debilitating, or even smothering, and they would have been, would have diverted him from his high aims and aspirations, but for his unique resources, his controlling mind, his self-respect, his shaping creativeness. The intellect, will, geniality, persistency, superiority, of the individual man, Goethe, it was that sowed this new field of circumstances with fresh facts and principles, with doings and sayings and writings which make the quiet little Saxon town sparkle on the map of Germany with a solitary radiance.

Goethe was not a man to rest or stop. So, in the flush of his *Werther* fame, he wrote *Clavigo* and other minor dramatic pieces. These were rather relaxations after the strain of tense work than solid work themselves. When he made *Clavigo* known to Merk, the clear-sighted, plain-spoken friend said: "Such dirt thou must not write any more of: others can do that." Goethe could not but throw off what was on his brain, whether the mood or subject were the best or not. His greatest works he inwardly hugged and carried about with him for years, as we have seen. But from his abundant utterance, and his overflowing fullness of facts and conceptions, he was led to write scores of pages, not only of prose, but of verse, some of which have not the singleness and rounded compactness, the tightness which will let nothing in and nothing out, the organic unity of poems in the stricter sense, of poems such as are so many of his.

A decisive act of Goethe's opening manhood was his visit to Weimar, a visit which soon became an abode, and an abode for a long life. When the capabilities and character of the man are taken into account, they may be deemed a good fortune for him, — those Weimar surroundings and opportunities. The full friendship of

a man like the Duke of Weimar was a providential boon to a man like Goethe. Had it not been so, he, with his warm instincts and conscious proclivities, would soon have discovered that his growth was obstructed, that the satisfaction to æsthetic and intellectual wants was not what it might be; and then surely he would have sought other conditions. In his occasional miffs with the Duke, and temporary discontents with his position, he always felt that he could on any day strike his tent and remove to another ground; and at such moments he may have thought, with a justifiable pride, that the removal would be a greater loss to others than to him. We have seen that he carried with him from Frankfort, already conceived in his brain, at least two of his larger works, *Faust* and *Egmont*. Had he believed that Weimar was not the best place to hatch them in, he would have built for himself a nest elsewhere.

The unfolding of Goethe's powers and character during his first decade in Weimar, the reader will have been able to trace in the preceding chapters; still more distinctly the effect upon him of twenty months' residence in Italy.

When he came back from Italy, Goethe gave himself up to literature and science, resigning his chief political functions as Minister. Of

practical work he had, as relaxation from poetry, what would have filled full the daily life of most men; he had the theatre, the mines in Ilmenau, the University at Jena. The University, for which he did so much, was to him a resource and an aid. A man of such activity and breadth needs co-workers, auxiliaries. In 1794 began his acquaintance with Schiller, ripening into intimacy, which, he says "brought a new spring into my existence."

Goethe was ever renewing himself, from the earth and the sky, from all Nature, with her daily unworn greetings to the open-hearted, from living men and men living in books, from the invisible spiritual promptings that ply around brains of fine susceptibility. All these jets, shooting about him, the fiery beams from his own yearning alert soul were ever touching into flame to quicken him with fresh illuminations. A still fuller inward source of renovation Goethe had, — the warmest blessing to any life, — namely, love for his fellow-men, a love making itself felt, through kindness and services, in small things and large. Let me beg the reader to read, in Mr. Lewes's full and noble life of Goethe, the chapter called "The Real Philanthropist." Acts of sympathy, practical love, enrich the years of Goethe as of

few men. In this chapter is laid bare a perfect exemplification of fraternal helpfulness, showing how Goethe relieved a man destitute of means and friends, a stranger to him, living at some distance ; and kept on relieving him for six years with counsel through letters, with money, giving him yearly a portion of his own moderate income (it was between the years '78 and '85), treating him in the letters he wrote him with brotherly consideration, with thoughtful delicacy. After reading this account, with its authenticated details, one can understand Wieland's enthusiastic exclamation, "I could have eaten Goethe for love!"

When Schiller died, Goethe was fifty-six. Just after that came the battle of Jena, with its immediate horrors in the partial sack of Weimar, and its more remote disastrous consequences in the subjugation of Northern Germany.

There is what may be called the historical sense, a discernment of the unfolding of humanity through progressive stages of political transformation. The constitutional history of England presents the clearest example of this unfolding, which is, however, to be traced in the history of all Christian nations, and before them in that of those chosen peoples, the

Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, who parentally preceded the Christian nations. This sense Goethe somewhat lacked; and hence he failed to seize in the political and social conditions of man, not the idea of progress, for that he had, but of progression through revolt and revolution, as the only means of clearing the atmosphere when the moral and social equilibrium has got to be much and chronically disturbed. Hence he did not fully prize Luther, or perceive the necessity for the French Revolution. His organization made him averse to violence. This quality he inherited from his mother, who, when she engaged a new servant-maid, forbade the reporting to her of anything tragical or distressing or disturbing. In the midst of the mutinous ferment in Germany, caused by the French Revolution, Goethe writes in his Diary that he "held to what is established, and looked to bettering and vivifying it by intelligent direction. In this sense I have worked, consciously and unconsciously, all my life."

With such an organization, the conservatism natural to age made him in his latter days unsympathetic with popular political wishes and efforts for further liberation through revolution. He felt that to co-work for such was not his part. And let us not owe him a grudge for

not doing what it was not in his nature to do, but rather, let us be even thankful that he did not attempt what, with his mental constitution, would have ruffled that æsthetic calm which was needed in order that he should do the great things of his high calling. The prosperity of the world demands many, and many kinds of well-doers. Surely it were unseemly to wish, to the extraordinarily long list of Goethe's benefactions to add deeds which others could do who could not do his. If it was a fault in him, this want of sympathy with revolutionary movement, let us bethink us that the virtues and bountiful achievements of such men weave a luminous veil through which their faults ought to be but partially seen, and that very faults are often the alloy which gives to pure metal its practical tenacity.

And so, during those hard Napoleonic years, between 1806 and 1813, he comforted himself, not by issuing patriotic songs and pamphlets, but with Botany and Optics, with working at his *Theory of Colors* (the very revolutionary enterprise of trying to dethrone Newton), with writing the *Elective Affinities*, and preparing to write the *West-eastern Divan*.

For his old age Goethe laid up stores in the love of men, far and near, in the affectionate

devotion of the many in contact with him, in the warm good-will of neighbors and fellow-workers, in the widening and deepening circle of a great renown, and especially in his intellectual delight in Nature, whose intimacy he, with singleness of purpose, had cultivated from youth onward, and who now on his advanced age smiled her deep benignant smile, and still soothed him, as in his tempestuous years she had early soothed the tumult of his spirit. To the last he had the active, inward resources of an indefatigable curiosity and of a genial productiveness.

Ever a learner, besides the variegated, always expanding fields of Science, the fresh growths in all the Literatures of Europe wafted to him their perfume and profit. In his Art Journal, *Kunst und Alterthum*, he published notices of new books from France, England, Italy. He worked at the Second Part of *Wilhelm Meister*, at the Second Part of *Faust;* revised his works for the final edition.

His son and daughter-in-law lived with him, and his grandchildren played about his knees. Near and far around him, part of the reward for his life-long work, was the homage of the cultivated, the enlightened, the wise of Christendom. He worked on with the zest of his

earlier days. In 1828, in his seventy-ninth year, he writes to Zelter: "In my garden I pass many a delightful hour; for there I collect myself, and through harmony and inwardness get many a productive mood." Again in 1830 he writes to the same friend: "I may say it to you in your ear: I have the happiness that in my high age thoughts spring up in me, to pursue and execute which were well worth going over life again." Up to his last days life and power shone through his features and his speech. His eye was undimmed, his countenance unweakened, his mind clear and sprightly. Among the latest things he wrote were these lines: —

> "Every day and every night
> (Thus I gauge of man the fate)
> Does he ever aim at right,
> He is ever fair and great."

What the mental characteristics of Goethe are, of what quality is his genius, the reader will have formed some notion from expositions and translations, in the foregoing pages. Merk early seized a fundamental feature in Goethe's organization when he said to him: "Thy endeavor, thy bent, from which nothing can turn thee, is to give a poetic form to reality; others seek to realize the so called poetical, the imag-

inative, and that yields nothing but nonsense." The latter half of the sentence, is it not itself nonsense? When a poet aims to give a poetic form to reality, as Goethe does, is he not then seeking to realize the poetical? That he be able to give a poetic form to reality, must he not have an ideal, a model, in his mind? And whence does this model draw the essentials of a poem, truth and beauty? From what, if not from this, that the endowments of intellect and sensibility in the poet be so fine and full, and so enlightened by a sense of the perfect, that thereby the product of his working after this interior model remains true to Nature while brightened beyond her general brightness? Moreover, when the poet has had great familiarity with the actual, as Goethe soon got to have through his immense power of observation and assimilation, he can then do what the competent sculptor or painter does, he can keep his hand true to Nature without her visible presence; and this he can do, not solely because of his long familiarity with her, but because his own being is so truly gauged, so choicely furnished. For Lear and Lear's fool, for Imogen and Polonius, Shakespeare did not need immediate models. And where did he get Puck and Ariel? The main need, the

primary requirement to produce genuine poetry is, that the producer carry, inborn within him, true ideals; and this implies rich internal resources, and among them a pure sense of the beautiful. As Goethe, in the remark quoted in a previous chapter, said to Eckerman about *Faust:* "Had I not had the world in my soul from the beginning, I must ever have remained blind with my seeing eyes, and all experience and observation would have been dead and unproductive."

To be true, the ideals must be faithful to the broad designs and sane proportions of Nature, as faithful as are Don Quixote and my Uncle Toby. The reading world is deluged with false ideals, in novels and in much popular verse. What Merk ascribed to Goethe, sagaciously and rightly ascribed to him, that his bent was to give a poetic form to reality, is what other poets try to do; and what most of them partially fail to do, because they have not within their own brains a high and true model. Some of the most popular of modern poetry has just this defect. Its authors are not deep enough naturalists. They take up a real story or incident or a legend, and versify it cleverly, so as to captivate for a while a multitude of readers; but not having within them a true and pithy

ideal (which is a rare possession) their work lacks a soul, and thence a genuine body too. They are not in close and subtle *rapport* with the heart of Nature; they cannot "think the thoughts of God," as Goethe did. They have not the fullness and richness of sensibility and of perception which give richness of experience, and which in poetry supply body and substantiality. Their thoughts and imaginings lack substance. Were they to meet one of Nature's ideals, in shape of man or woman, they could not verify, and therefore not keenly appreciate, him or her.

That Goethe took delight in the concrete and not in the abstract, to this we owe the roundness and flexibility and naturalness of his characterization. To illustrate him again by contrast: a meditative poet, like Wordsworth for instance, does not require the concretion of his conceptions and imaginings in organized bodies. A simple form, like that of the ode or sonnet, gives body enough for his subjective sentiment. Nearly all of Wordsworth's four hundred sonnets and the most of his lyrics are in a region of abstraction. When he puts his thought into a story or tale, he limps: he has little epic gift, and still less dramatic. Yet there is no truer poetry than Wordsworth's,

true in feeling and true in thought. When the poet's head rests on a sound heart, he need not be afraid to write out of his head.

All great poets deal in meditation. Goethe does, and Shakespeare immensely; but Wordsworth is almost exclusively a meditative poet. I doubt whether Goethe, had he known Wordsworth's poetry, would have fully valued it. Goethe is full of profound things, but did not give into flights: he is more broad than high. He preferred significant poetry to inventive or spiritual. I think he has somewhere a fling at Milton. He would probably not have taken to Shelley. Keats he would have greatly enjoyed. In the Greeks he delighted, especially in the sensuous, objective Homer; and he overrated Byron. At the same time he avers that Byron was a child in reasoning, an opinion which should curb excessive admiration.

Goethe himself was of large mould in reasoning capacity. He had that high range of thought reached through the commanding intellectual faculties, whereby are seized the relations of analogy and causation, the supreme intellectual faculties, which knit the subtlest as well as strongest bonds among thoughts themselves, and between thought and feeling; of whose

vast agency the most abundant and the most brilliant examples are to be found in the greatest pages of Shakespeare.

Above these great intellectual powers in Goethe, and far above his clear, rapid, sensuous perceptions, were those noble generic sensibilities, which give depth and breadth to human sympathies, and universality to poetic conceptions, and which in Goethe streamed often upward to link themselves to, and identify themselves with, divine sentiment. Illustrations of this mounting tendency the reader has seen in the conclusions of both Parts of *Faust*, and in the ballad *The Faithless Boy*. A still stronger illustration is another of his ballads, *The God and the Bayadere*. I give a translation of this great poem, because it is a sample of Goethe's best. He has here a material which, as being warm, palpitating, picturesque, fully meets his demand for the sensuous. Then the legend carries in its core a deep ethic principle, a principle human and divine, which is the soul that weaves around itself this beaming, undulatory, richly colored body. Then the poem is significant as few poems are, and through that significance binds us in beautiful, mysterious union to the spiritual world.

## THE GOD AND THE BAYADERE.

A LEGEND OF INDIA.

MAHADOH, Earth's sceptre bearing,
Comes the sixth time here below,
That with us a like life sharing,
He may feel both joy and woe.
Here he lives our daily living,
In himself lets all things be;
Would he punish, be forgiving,
Men he must as mortal see.
And has he the city as traveller inspected,
His looks to the great and the little directed,
He quits it at nightfall still onward to flee.

Thus with much made well acquainted,
As he leaves the city's whirl
He beholds, with cheeks bepainted,
An abandoned, lovely girl.
"Hail thee, maiden!" "Wait thou there,
Quickly to thee I will come."
"And who art thou?" "Bayadere;
And this is of Love the home."
And now she bestirs her, the cymbals smooth sounding,
She dances, in languishing circles soft bounding,
And bending she hands him sweet flowers in bloom.

Him caressing she then sprightly
Draws across the threshold dim.
"Beauteous stranger, 'twill here brightly
Shine when quick my lamp I trim.
Art thou weary, I'll revive thee,
Soothe thy wayworn members' smart,
What thou wilt that I will give thee,
Quiet, pleasure, frolic's art."

And busily now assumed ills she assuages:
The god inly smiles, as with joy he presages
Through vilest corruption a true human heart.

And exacts he slavish duties;
Gladder grows the maiden youth,
And what first were artful beauties,
Changéd are to nature's truth.
And thus shooting from the blossom
By degrees the fruit doth grow;
Is obedience in the bosom,
Love will not have far to go.

But sharply, more sharply still further to prove her,
Resolves the deep searcher of hearts now to move her
By ecstacy, terror, and frightfullest woe.

Kisses he her cheek distainéd,
And she feels love's thrilling fears,
And the maiden is enchainéd,
And she weeps her first warm tears.
At his feet she sinketh pining,
Not for lust or profit low,
And those agile limbs reclining,
They refuse all service now.

And so o'er the couch's sweet mysteries spinning,
A suitable veil, with their darkness quick winning,
The favoring night-hours all silently throw.

Late by sleep mid smiles enfolden,
Early roused from briefest rest,
Finds she, by her heart upholden,
Dead the much belovéd guest.
On him falls she in loud sorrow,
Wakes him not her anguish dire,
And his stiff limbs on the morrow
Are borne to their grave of fire.

She hearkens the priest and the funeral chantings,
She raves, and she rushes with soul-wrested pantings.
"Who art thou? what drives thee to this solemn pyre?"

Prostrate on the bier she cast her,
Her wild shriek transpierced the crowd.
"O! my husband, my dear master!
I will seek him in his shroud.
Shall it be to ashes wasted,
Of those limbs the godlike grace?
Mine he was, so quickly blasted,
Mine for only one short space."
The priests they are singing, "The agéd we carry
Who long on the earth in dull feebleness tarry,
We carry the young ere they start in life's race.

"To thy priest's words give thou ear;
As his wife thou hast no right;
Liv'st thou not as Bayadere,
And so canst thou have no plight.
Only shadows bodies follow
To the silent realm of rest;
Wife her husband, that we hallow,
As both fame's and duty's hest.
Let trumpets resound, let be kindled the fuel;
O! take him, ye gods, of young manhood the jewel,
O! take him the youth through hot flames to the blest."

Thus the choir, unpitying, wringeth
Still more deeply her sore heart,
And with outstretched arms she springeth
In the flames that round him part.
But the god-youth quick upriseth
From the pyre whereon he lay;
With him she whom he so prizeth,
In his arms she floats away.

> The Deity joys in a sinner repenting,
> The lost one uplift the Immortals relenting,
> With fiery arms up to heavenly day.

A few final words about the man, as judged by some of his most noted contemporaries. The man is always father to the poet.

Merk, who was not liable to overpraise, said of Goethe: "Beautiful as are his writings, his life is still more beautiful."

Herder, almost as little given as Merk to laudation, is cited, in a letter from Schiller to Koerner, as passing the following deliberate judgment on Goethe. The letter is dated Weimar, August 12th, 1787, several years before Schiller himself knew Goethe, and a year before he had seen him. "Goethe is spoken of here by many with a sort of devotion, and is even more loved and admired as a man than an author. Herder says he has a most clear judgment, great depth of feeling, and the purest sentiments. Whatever he does, he does well; and, like Julius Cæsar, he can do many things at the same time. According to Herder, he is free from all spirit of intrigue; he has never done harm to any one, and never undermined the happiness of a fellow-creature. He hates mystery, and in his political transactions acts openly and boldly. Herder says

that as a man of business, he is still more deserving of admiration than as a poet. He says he has a mind large enough for anything (*ein allumfassender geist*").

Napoleon, after an interview with Goethe at Erfurt, in 1808, exclaimed, *Voilà un homme!* "There is a man!"

Chancellor Mueller bears testimony to the love and esteem entertained for Goethe by the citizens of Weimar, especially to the attachment and veneration of all who had lived in his house or had been immediately about his person. The same high witness thus writes about him in another passage: "Never did he employ the great influence granted to him by his prince and friend, for selfish ends, or to the injury of any one. I can indeed affirm of my own knowledge, that among the numerous letters and confidential suggestions which have been preserved among the Duke's papers, there is not one to be found in which he does not plead with the warmth of personal interest on behalf of some instance of honest service, or of promising talent."

This volume cannot be more fitly closed than with words of Schiller, uttered three years before his own death. The great friend and rival of Goethe thus writes: —

"It is not the greatness of his intellect which binds me to him. If he were not as a man more admirable than any I have ever known, I should only marvel at his genius from the distance. But I can truly say that in the six years I have lived with him, I have never for one moment been deceived in his character. He has a high truth and integrity, and is thoroughly in earnest for the Right and the Good; hence all hypocrites and phrasemakers are uncomfortable in his presence."

THE END.